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Number 61

July 1989

Overrun • Tangled Tales • CES Report

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD



LIGHTS...CAMERA...INTERACTION

Cinema and Computers

Cinemaware's Lords of the Rising Sun



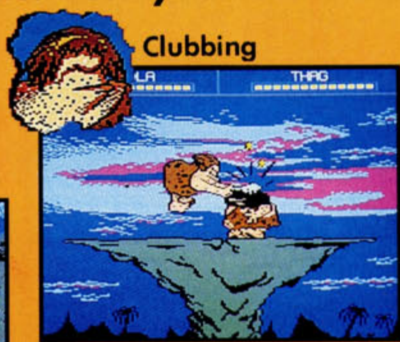
INDIANA JONES and the LAST CRUSADE

CAVEMAN UGH-LYMPICS™

By Dynamix, Inc. and Greg Johnson

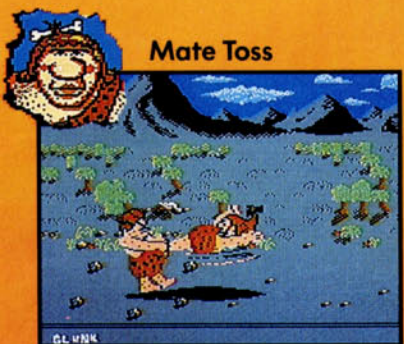
Before corporate sponsors and fashion gear, there were Cavemen. Competition was *ugh*-ly. Athletes won by bashing the other guy first. Pick your favorite Ugh-lympian. Club your way through six pre-hysterical events. Beat your friends to the Caves Of Fame.

Clubbing



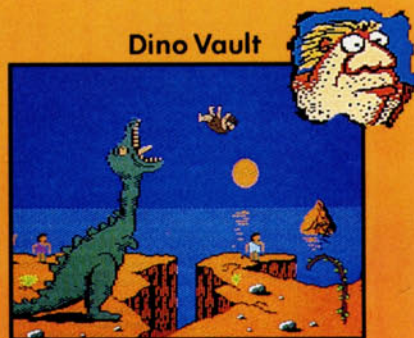
"Become one with club. Don't fall for look-at-birdie-in-sky trick. Don't check feet for fleas."
—Glunk.

Mate Toss



"Swing fast circles. Remember let go. Good for medals. Not good for getting dates."
—Crudla.

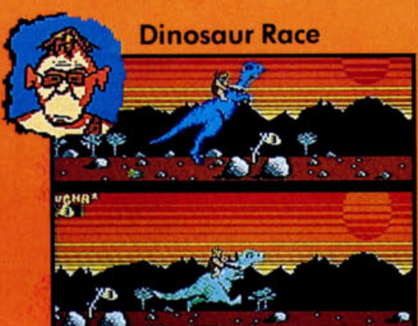
Dino Vault



"I like plant pole in totally cave-ular sand, soar high in air, wave to way-hungry dino."
—Thag.

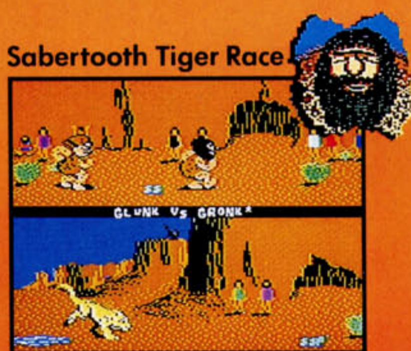
The greatest Neanderthal athletes of all time share their secrets.

Dinosaur Race



"Club dino head, go faster. Too much club, dino bite dust. Vincent hate dust."
—Vincent.

Sabertooth Tiger Race



"Run fast fast from tiger. Watch out for cactus. Trip other cave-guy. Him big lunch for kitty."
—Gronk.

Firemaking

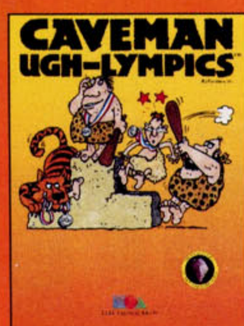


"Rub sticks fast. Make bright, ouchy, hot thing first. Try not get dizzy. Remember to duck."
—Ugha.

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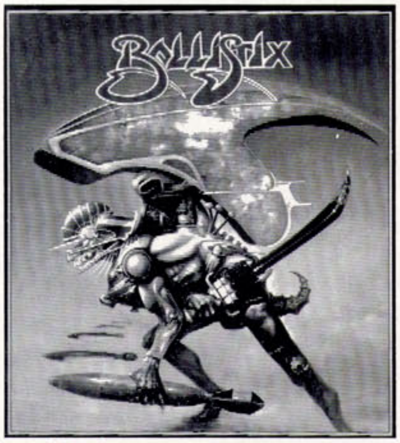


COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Covering the World of Computer Games For Eight Years

July 1989 Number 61







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The Shadow of Your Style

New Directions at the Consumer Electronics Show



Travelling northbound on I-94 toward O'-Hare Airport, your intrepid editorial staff found themselves enjoying the warmth of a mild Chicago day, while recounting the most interesting and innovative aspects of the Summer Consumer Electronics Show. Suddenly, the sky went dark. A jetliner on final approach had flown so low paralleling the freeway that the plane's shadow obscured the sun as it passed and gave us an eerie feeling that the plane itself was about to crash into us. It only lasted long enough to cause us to catch our breaths, but it was a memorable encounter in spite of its brevity.

The **Nintendo** phenomenon has already lasted longer than many in our industry thought it would and cast a more disturbing shadow over the disk-based entertainment software market than our "plummeting" jetliner. Now, however, judging from the new products we were shown, the shadow of "Me, too!" **Nintendo**-style disk-based games may be passing. In general, the entire range of disk-based entertainment software looks more promising than it has for over a year and a half. Even as we had held our breaths for a brief, unnerving moment on I-94, it seems that the entertainment software industry is finally catching its breath after an ominous first quarter and 18 months of trying to discover its identity.

"More" (Multi-Player Games)

There seems to be a renewed emphasis on multi-player games. Jon Freeman and Ann Westfall are beginning to see the light at the end of their "Rainbow Road" (working title) and **Electronic Arts** will publish it as *Swords of Twilight*. The fictional "universe" contains eight different worlds connected by a "Rainbow Road," equivalent to a worm hole or time-space warp. These worlds have been subverted by evil Shadowlords (not to be confused with the Shadowlords in *Ultima V*). The player(s) choose from 31 characters (each with a unique personal history and graphics display), in order to defeat the villains. The "universe" is dynamic and changes according to player interaction. The interface allows different players (up to four can play simultaneously) to do different things at the same time. The handling of non-player characters is interesting in that they have "long memories" and will act accordingly if the player-characters do not treat them appropriately.

Atomic Entertainment, a new developer for **Activision**, will offer two multi-player adventures before the end of the year. Each will support up to four players playing simultaneously by means of keyboard (two players) and either a joystick/mouse or two joystick combination for the other two players. The working title of the fantasy action/adventure (more in the *Prophecy* than *Gauntlet* style) is *Enchanted Lands* in which the players explore eight different realms (each twelve screens across by twenty screens down and featuring 256 color graphics and smooth-scrolling sprites). They call it a CRPG with an arcade-style engine, but they insist that players won't want to shoot everything and there is more free-will than in most action-adventures. **Atomic** is also developing a time-travel adventure, tentatively called *Time Raft*, utilizing the same basic interface.

Another approach to multi-player games is **Origin**'s *Omega*, a neural cyber-tank battlegame where players build the chassis and AI for a cybertank via an easy-to-use Mac-style interface and intuitive pseudocode. After the file is saved, the program can pit several different player's tanks against each other in something like an advanced version of the old *Robotwar* game from now defunct **Muse Software**.

Many games to be released during the year will utilize null modem or standard modem connections to encourage human-vs.-human competition. **Electronic Arts** is importing *F-16 Combat Pilot* from the U.K. with a Gladiator mode (human-to-human), as well as five solo training missions and a solo campaign game. Other **EA-UK** products which support modem competition include *Powerdrome* (think of it as *Ferrari Formula I* in outer space) where players set-up space ships for seven different courses and *Populous* where players take on the role(s) of cosmic forces creating and ruling over entire worlds. **Epyx** offers a modem/null modem option for their space race game, *Flyton 500*, which features ten different courses and four vehicle classes.

Spectrum Holobyte is working on a game with the working title *Tank*. It uses unclassified information from the DARPA database to recreate the maps from three different geographical areas: Ft. Knox (training), the Middle East, and Europe. There will be a network option for the game (in cooperation with a major consumer network) which can involve up to thirty different tank commanders utilizing the same polygon fill terrain. Also, for those who can't really handle the "real-time" elements of a simulation, the game can be played like a wargame with the player giving orders and sitting back to watch.

Also, **Compuserve** has just announced a new two-on-two version of *Sniper!* (see also page 27).

Even the dedicated game systems get in on the multi-player act, as **Sega**'s new 16-bit **Genesis** machine comes with a **TeleGenesis** or modem option. Also, **Acclaim** has built on the success of its remote wireless controller for **Nintendo** with a new **Double-Player System** which gives two players the capacity to compete against each other without untangling a mass of wires.

Perhaps the most unique of all the multi-player games presented at the show was the *Battletech Center* concept from **FASA/ESP Corp.** (the principals in **ESP Corp.** are also the principals from **FASA Corp.** who created *Battletech*). This is an environmental concept where players will pay approximately $5.00 for a thirty minute experience (a 10 minute briefing in a futuristic Combat Information Center, followed by a 10 minute strategy ses-

(Continued on page 20)



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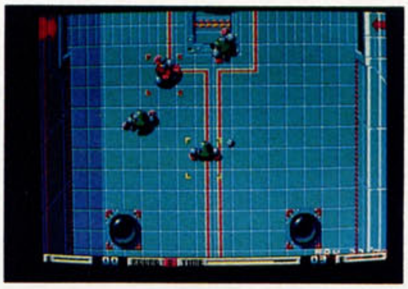
Cinemaware
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Westlake Village, CA 91362

SPEEDBALL: "Rollerball", the bloodthirsty sport of the future, finally makes it way to the computer. A cross between soccer, hockey, and roller derby, Speedball enables the player to play solo, face-to-face, participate in an eleven team league, or act as spectator. Acting as general manager, the player chooses a franchise and builds his team from the ground up. Then, it's off to the steel arena to compete, cheat and bully your way to the top. If things look bad, you can even bribe officials or get opposing players to "take a dive". IBM (pictured), Amiga, & Atari ST ($39.95). C-64 ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

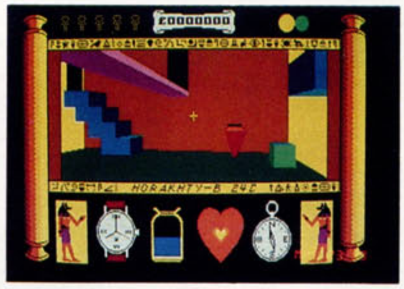
TOTAL ECLIPSE: Players race against a real time clock, as they search through a 15 level pyramid for the ancient shrine of Ra. The shrine must be destroyed or an ancient curse will destroy the moon. This won't be a cake walk as this overgrown grave is chock full o' puzzles, traps, and the undead bodies of the tomb's occupants. Smooth scrolling 3-D graphics enhance the first person perspective. IBM (pictured), Amiga and Atari ST ($39.95), C-64 ()$29.95). Circle Reader Service #2.

Cosmi
431 N. Figueroa
Wilmington, CA 90744

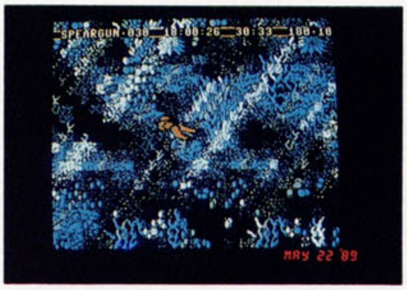
NAVY SEAL: This action game offers gamers the chance to become one of the Navy's elite. Players parachute from a transport, engage in an underwater speargun battle, repel down ropes, and fire their silencer rifles at hostile targets. After completion of several training sequences, the Seals face five missions of graduating difficulty, including underwater sabotage, hostage rescue, and surprise raiding of an enemy base. C-64 (pictured) ($29.95), & IBM ($34.95). Circle Reader Service #3.



Speedball



Total Eclipse



Navy SEAL



Axe of Rage



Devon Aire



Omnicron Conspiracy

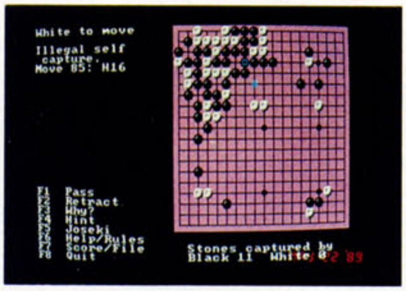
Advertisers

Epyx
600 Galveston Drive
P.O.Box 8020
Redwood City, CA 94063

AXE OF RAGE: Axe me no questions, I'll tell you no lies. The latest action game from Epyx gives new depth to the "hack and slash" genre, as players literally chop and dice their way through valleys, caves and dungeons to the ultimate showdown with the evil Drax. The player has a choice of male or female characters to run, and up to 10 axe moves in each battle sequence. With 18 different creatures to fight, all the battle moves get used. From the campy, some might say tasteless, box art to the grouchy dungeon dude in the kinky shorts, the game is done with a dark sense of humor....would that be like "axe-in-cheek"? C-64 ($34.95). Circle #4.

DEVON AIRE: Hidden diamonds and a mysterious mansion are the basics in this graphic adventure/treasure hunt game for one. The game features great three dimensional graphics and some unique monsters (killer canaries and mutant pig-mice). The player must move furniture, stack chairs, balance on champagne glasses, open drawers and search everything for the hidden jewels before the killer capons and ravaging rodents steal all their strength. Atari ST (pictured) ($49.95) & C-64 ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

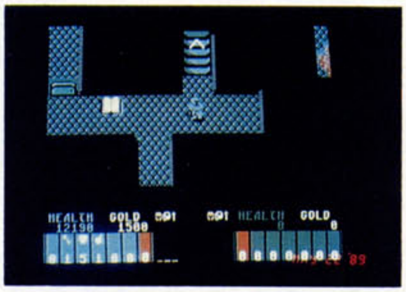
OMNICRON CONSPIRACY: "Pigs in Space" would be a good subtitle for this humorous, graphic adventure game from Epyx. The player takes the part of a space cop on a mission to bust up an intergalactic drug ring. Flying spaceships, exploring taverns and temples, and fer-



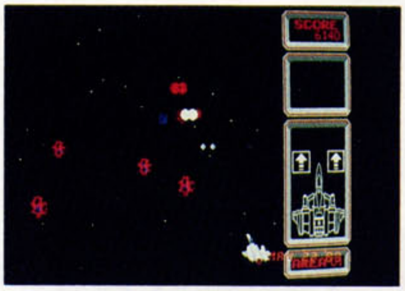
Cosmos



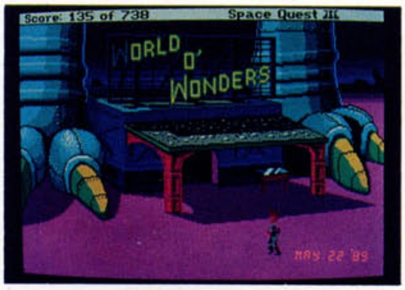
Slots & Cards



Fire King



Silpheed



Space Quest III



Sky Shark

reting out clues from a variety of unusual suspects will keep players moving. Resist the temptation to shoot everything that moves. (How refreshing!) IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service # 6.

Ishi Press
1400 N. Shoreline Blvd.
Building A-7
Mountain View, CA 94043

COSMOS: Players test their skill against the computer in this version of *GO*. The computer comes with 100 levels of play, offers online hints and move explanations, and the board can be set up from 7x7 to a standard 19x19 matrix. The game can be learned easily on the smaller board and then the player can tackle larger boards as his level of play increases. The game also features automatic replay, move recall, option to play black or white, and plays at a 15 Kyu level. If Chess is a battle, GO is a war. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #7.

Microdeal
576 S. Telegraph
Pontiac, MI 48053

SLOTS & CARDS: Pack your money belts and get ready for another trip to Vegas. This package provides five slot machines (multipliers, Sevens Wild, Multi-Bar, & Fruit Multi-Bar), four video card games (Blackjack, High/Low, & two types of Video Poker), and Keno. The game was designed with the aid of a slot mechanic from one of the major Vegas Strip hotels, so the odds and reel loadings have been figured just as they are done in the casinos. (That means you'll probably win just enough to keep playing till you lose!) IBM (pictured), Amiga and Atari ST ($39.95). Circle Reader Service # 8.

Strategic Studies Group
1747 Orleans Ct.
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

FIRE KING: A magical beast and its evil hordes have descended upon the land, killing the Fire Lord and holing up in the catacombs below the city. The mayor has elected you to confront the beast and restore order to the land. One or two players lead selected heroes on this quest which spans across forests, deserts, temples, and multiple dungeon levels. the 3-D, overhead graphics and play system bear close resemblance to the arcade hit, *Gauntlet*. C-64 version to be released later this year. Circle Reader Service #9.

Sierra On-Line
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614

SILPHEED: Intergalactic terrorists threaten the harmony established by the Milky Way Union, and it's up to the pilot of the experimental Silpheed fighter to set things straight. Pilots face multiple levels of 3-D enemies on their way to the ultimate conflict with the battleship Glore. Nice graphics and tremendous sound, but an arcade game system we've seen many times before. IBM ($34.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

SPACE QUEST III: The wacky exploits of Roger Wilco continue in part three of the Space Quest series. Roger's latest task: rescuing The Two Guys from Andromeda. The Two Guys have been kidnapped by the Pirates of Pestulon and are being forced to create second rate games for the disreputable publisher, ScumSoft. Sierra takes their unique brand of adventuring to new heights with detailed, animated sequences, a wonderfully silly storyline, and a sound track so stunning, it may justify the purchase of a soundboard. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

Taito
267 W. Esplanade
North Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada, V7M1A5

SKY SHARK: Taito ports another arcade hit to the PC market. In this one, players pilot their P-40 fighter through a host of enemy units including fighters, tanks, and battleships, in an attempt to rescue POW's from a highly guarded enemy base. A joystick jockey's delight! IBM (pictured) ($34.95) & C-64 ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #12.

Conversions Received

Action Fighter (Mindscape) ST
Baal (Psygnosis) Amiga
Bubble Bobble (Taito) Amiga, ST
Deja Vu II (Mindscape) Amiga, IIGS
The Duel (Accolade) C-64
The Games (Epyx) ST
Gauntlet (Mindscape) Mac
World Karate Championship (Epyx) ST, C-64
Mind Roll (Epyx) Amiga
Modem Wars (EA) IBM
Operation Wolf (Taito) Amiga
Renegade (Taito) IBM, Amiga, ST
Steel Thunder (Accolade) IBM
Tangled Tales (Origin) C-64
Where in World is Carmen San Diego (Broderbund) Amiga
Where in USA is Carmen San Diego (Broderbund) Mac



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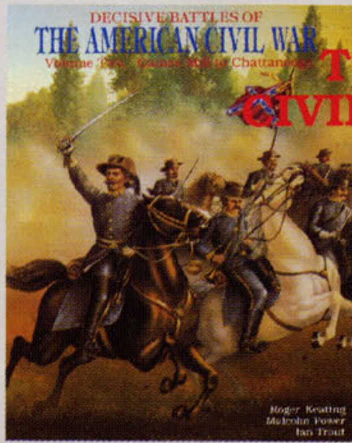
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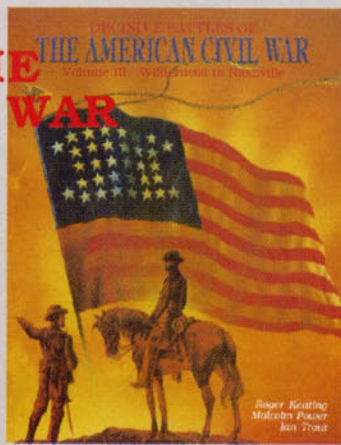
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THE CIVIL WAR



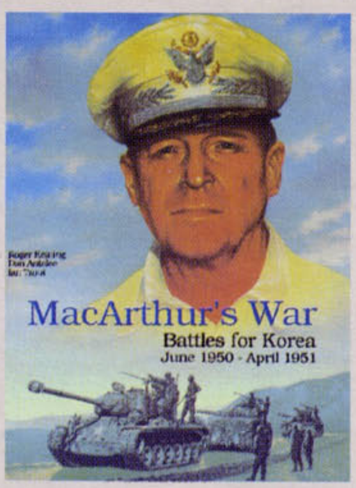
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COLD HARBOR
ATLANTA
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The Korean War

'Across the 38th'
Taejon
Naktong Bulge
Unsan
Chongchon
Chosin Reservoir
Chipyong
Imjin

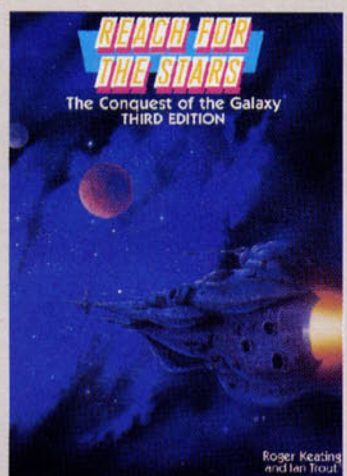
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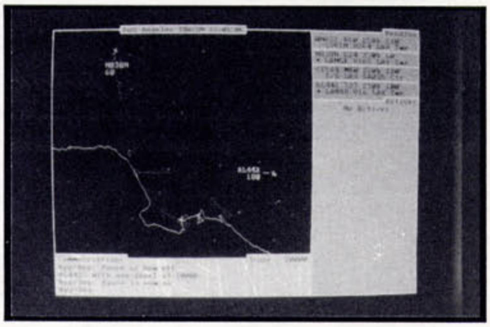
How to Purchase. In North America, visit your retailer or call Electronic Arts 800-245-4525 (in CA call 800-562-1112) for VISA or Mastercard orders or write to Electronic Arts, P.O. Box 7530 San Mateo, CA. 94403. In Australia, write to SSG, P.O. Box 261 Drummoyne, 2047.

Can You Handle the Stress?

A Detailed Air Traffic Control Simulation

Review by M. Evan Brooks





TITLE:	Tracon
SYSTEM:	IBM (CGA minimum); (a Mac version is scheduled)
SYSTEM REVIEWED ON:	IBM 386 (VGA)
PRICE:	$49.95
PUBLISHER:	Wesson International 1439 Circle Ridge Austin, TX 78746 (512) 328-0100

Initial Approach

TRACON (Terminal Radar Approach CONtrol) is a detailed simulation of the world of air traffic control. There have been numerous other air traffic control products; most noticeably, **MicroProse**'s *Kennedy Approach* (1985). However, that product was much more of a game, while *Tracon* is a very detailed and complex simulation, which could well be used as a training tool by actual traffic controllers.

In February of 1989, **Wesson International** released Version 1.5, which allows actual voice communication and a corrected compass heading (see Game Play). In addition, three (3) scenario disks have been released (Western, Central and Eastern United States), each having an additional eight (8) airports. Pricing for the sector disks is $19.95 for one, $32.95 for two, and $39.95 for all three.

Air Traffic Controller School (Documentation)

The documentation is very complete and professionally executed. As a learning device, a tutorial tape is included which gives the player a basic understanding of his role. While one's first impression may be intimidation/terror, the program is relatively easy to learn. In fact, a one-page "Quick Reference Command" is sufficient for initial play.

A READ.ME file is included on both master and scenario disks, and should be printed out before play. This gives needed information and a quick reference as to the heading and altitude approaches for the various airports.

Perhaps the documentation's only real failing is that it does not disclose how much traffic would actually occur at different times in the various airspace boundaries. This would have allowed the player to gauge his progress against reality.

Radar Display (Graphics)

The graphics of *Tracon* are well done. Different airports and numerous center hand-off points are displayed, while the aircraft themselves are easily discernible. The playing screen resembles an actual radar screen, and with the voice-actuated commands, one can readily enter this "simulation world". Help-keys are easily accessible, and one should often use Alt-M (display map references) and Alt-F (display flight paths) in order to maximize performance. If the situation is static, the F10 key will "accelerate" time.

In addition, the "+" key zooms perspective up to 4X, while the "-" key reverses this process. Such zooming is essential for vectoring aircraft into an accurate final approach; just insure that one does not ignore the rest of the "world" while concentrating on a single plane.

No Ivory Tower (Game Play)

Game play is a misnomer; *Tracon* emphasizes simulation play. This is a valid distinction, because the product is so accurate. In turn, this accounts for possible criticism as a "game." There are certain occupations which seem fascinating to the outsider, but the reality yields little long-term enjoyment. For example, a blackjack dealer at a casino would seem to be an interesting job; but would you really like to deal cards eight hours a day to a crowd of somewhat obstreperous tourists? Similarly, air traffic controllers stare at a radar screen for eight hours a day and the slightest miscalculation on their part could result in massive tragedy (or even a mass firing, as PATCO discovered to their dismay). The "burn-out" and suicide rates for traffic controllers is dismally high, and their beverage of choice would seem to be Maalox. *Tracon* yields a fascinating picture, however. Small doses of this occupational madness can be accepted with alacrity and eagerness.

Although the simulation may be played via keyboard, use of the mouse and keyboard are strongly recommended. As planes appear on the screen, one must vector them into proper approaches: overflights are the easiest to handle, since one simply hands them off to the next center at the proper time; take-offs should be carefully watched to insure no "traffic jams" develop, while landings offer the most challenge. One must have the plane descend to the proper altitude and enter the proper flight path; even if one does everything right, "lousy" pilots miss their approaches 50% of the time.

If a landing is botched, have the plane climb to an altitude at least 1000 feet higher than other planes vectoring into the final approach and circle around, being last on the incoming traffic.

At the same time, insure proper separation and clearance from other flights. A separation conflict (3 mi/1000') may easily lead to a near miss (1 mi/1000') or to a crash; the latter will disclose how many innocent individuals one has killed, terminate his employment as a controller, erase his previous records, and dump one

(Continued on page 47)

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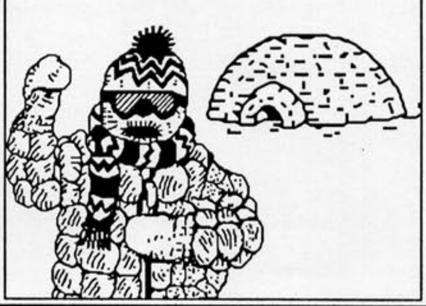
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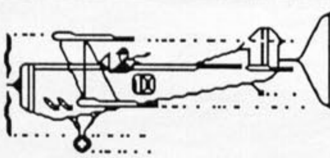
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The CGW Test Lab

The Gamer's Guide to Joysticks

What do you look for in a joystick? Do you want one that is easy to hold or one that fires fast? Do you prefer one that has plenty of tension in the stick action or one that offers more "give"? At *CGW*, we noticed that very few hardware reviewers write about how the hardware affects game play, so we decided to try some experiments. We tested several joysticks for their performance in "rapid fire" mode and raced against the clock (and each other) to check their performance in terms of left/right and up/down response. Our results are described in this article.

Ergonomics: Gamers who play arcade-style games or action/simulations for hours are concerned about comfort. **Epyx** was the original leader in this field with their *Epyx 500XJ* joystick that conformed to the human hand. **Mindscape** followed suit by designing the *Power Player's Joystick* with a handle which can easily be held like an ice cream cone. These solved part of the problem, but they were still made out of hard plastic. **Wico**'s *Ergostick* went several steps further and now offers a shape which is pleasantly conformable to the human hand, a soft pliable material that is easy to hand onto, and fire buttons placed conveniently at the bottom of the controller. For those who prefer a more stable base on their joysticks, the controllers from **Advanced Gravis** offer a very wide base out of hard plastic, but they also offer a foam-padded stick/grip. The **Kraft** and **SunCom** controllers have a traditional base and stick.

Rapid Fire: Most arcade-style games require shooting. Since most of these games have no ammunition limitations, players will normally perform better by using continuous fire. We wondered if there was any difference in the rate of fire between different models of joysticks. On the Commodore 64/128, we used **Taito**'s *Sky Shark* to test rapid fire (Note that these joysticks are compatible with Amiga and Atari ST, as well.). Each controller was tested multiple times with the same technician operating the fire button. During the test, we noticed a potential drawback to the **Advanced Gravis** controller when used on these machines. When in rapid fire mode, the stick will not allow the player's on-screen character (in this case, the airplane) to move backward.

Joystick	Bullets per 10 Seconds
Advanced Gravis:	46
Epyx:	48
Mindscape Power Players	47
SunCom Tac5:	49

We repeated the tests on the IBM using the same software. None of the joysticks offered a true continuous fire mode on this product, but when the operator fired as fast as possible, the following results were collated:

Advanced Gravis:	54
Wico *Ergostick:*	42
Kraft *KC3:*	40

On the Apple IIGS, we used **Data East**'s *Ikari Warriors* to test the rapid fire capabilities of the joysticks. The **Kraft** functioned equivalent to its performance on the IBM compatibles, but the **Wico** suffered on the Apple.

Kraft *KC3:*	39
Wico *Ergostick:*	37

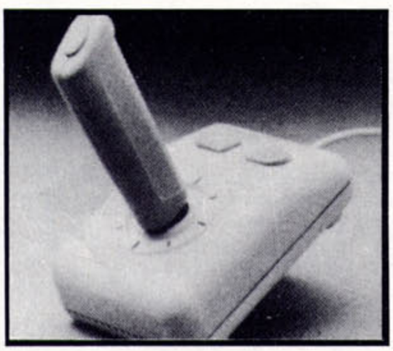
Movement Response: Sometimes, games require fast left/right and up/down movement in order to cause the on-screen character to move faster. We tested the same joysticks for this response by using the "Velodrome Cycling" event from **Epyx**'s *The Games:Summer Edition*. Each joystick was tested in both controller ports against all of the competing hardware.

The **SunCom** *Tac5* won every heat, no matter which operator was using it. Although the left/right and up/down response on this controller feels sloppy, it actually offers a very short stroke at the base when moving between the contacts. The other joysticks are presented in the order of their finish in this competition:

Epyx *500XJ*
Mindscape *Power Player's Joystick*,
and **Advanced Gravis** *Joystick*.

On the IBM, we used the portion of **Mindscape**'s *Combat Course* where the soldier crawls under the wire to test this response. The **Advanced Gravis** performed best in this test, probably because it allows users to adjust the handle tension to any of eight settings. We used it at the highest tension setting. The **Kraft** *KC3* also performed well on this test, leaving the **Wico** *Ergostick* behind.

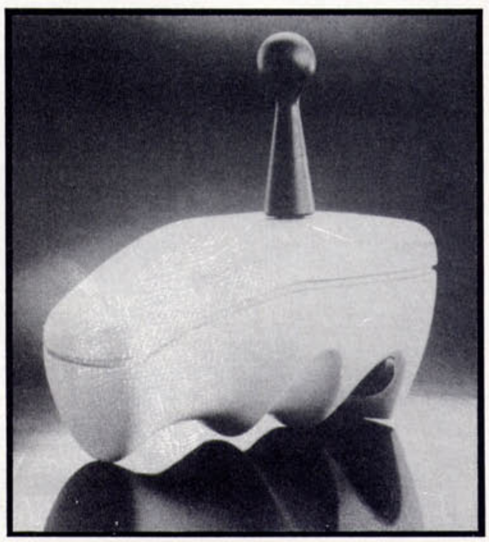
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Suncom Tac5
Circle Reader Service #13



Advanced Gravis Joystick
Circle Reader Service #14



Wico Ergostick
Circle Reader Service #15

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Indiana Jones and the Mything Link



A Sneak Preview of Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

Sean Connery is the man in the gray suit. He is also the link to both myth and mystery in both the film and graphic adventure, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Imagine the humor of *Zak McCracken and the Alien Mindbenders*, an expanded interface beyond *Maniac Mansion*, a plot with more puzzles and possibilities than the latest and final Indiana Jones film, and EGA graphics that are better than either *Maniac Mansion* or *Zak McCracken*. If such a game *can* be imagined, one has a very good idea of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.

Those who have seen the film are already aware that Sean Connery plays Henry Jones (Indiana's father, as well as a scholar who has made it his life's calling to find the Holy Grail). As a seeker of the Holy Grail, he serves as the link between Indy and the myth of the grail. For those who are unaware, the "Holy Grail" was, allegedly, the cup which Jesus used for the wine (which symbolized His blood) in the Last Supper. Since the Bible itself does not harbor any specific traditions concerning the grail, the story is easily susceptible to imaginative speculation. According to tradition, the cup was later used to collect the spilled blood of Jesus at the cross and was kept as an artifact of power until it was recovered during the First Crusade and carried off to England. From that point, the grail became intertwined with the Arthurian Legend.



The Adventure Game gives you the options Indy didn't pursue.



A pure Action Game based on the film is also under development.

Lucasfilm's movie and the graphic adventure based on it wisely eschew the Arthurian entanglements and build upon a new story about what happened to the grail. The movie uses the concept of a "Grail Diary" which was painstakingly kept by Connery's character over a period of years to advance the "mythos" surrounding the grail. The game fleshes out the movie property with a sixty page version of the "Grail Diary" which cross-references hints and advances the plot in both an on-line and off-line version. In addition to the obvious purpose of providing copy protection, there is a reason within the plot for having the diary both on-screen and in hard copy format.

The familiar **Lucasfilm** interface has changed in several ways. Similar to *Maniac Mansion*, players can shift command to more than one protagonist. Also, the designers added a "What is . . ." command which can be clicked on an item to determine what objects are "active" in a given scene. That should speed up play over the previous games. Distinctive from the earlier graphic adventures, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* offers more commands and special-case animation so that characters actually perform on-screen the actions that the player commands them to do. More importantly, in order to make a game out of a film, there are multiple solutions at various junctures in the game. One can usually be successful by imitating Indy's actions in the film, but there are more complex possibilities that can earn higher scores. Many players will want to play the game several times to try out all of the options.

The game recognizes that there are two distinct appeals to the Indiana Jones persona and players will want to utilize both of them. The game offers players a reasonable chance to "talk" their way out of various encounters. The adventure utilizes a dialogue/menu driven conversational approach analogous to **Cinemaware**'s *Sinbad and the Throne of the Falcon* or **Interplay**'s *Neuromancer* with their conversation balloon interface. In "Indy," however, there are no balloons, just a selection of potential repartee from a menu. It works, though. The other appeal is to action and the player has the option of commanding Indy to punch his way through a given situation in kind of a revised *Rocket Ranger* fist fight. Recognizing that most players will simply use a keyboard in

(Continued on page 22)

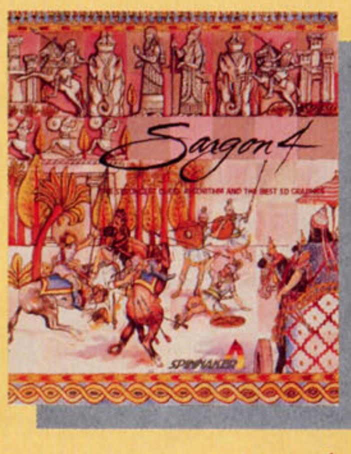
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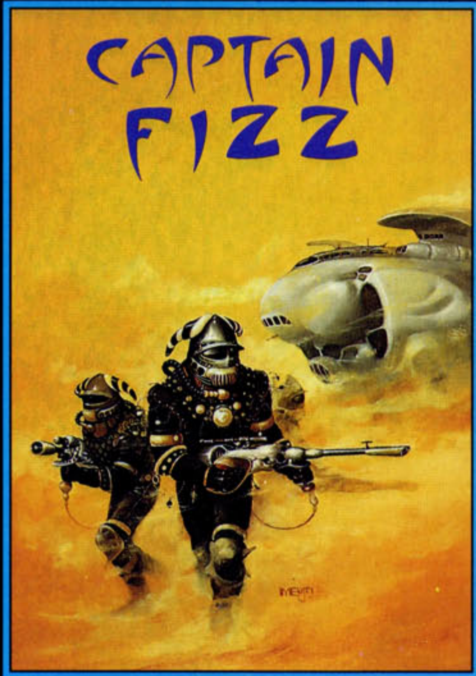


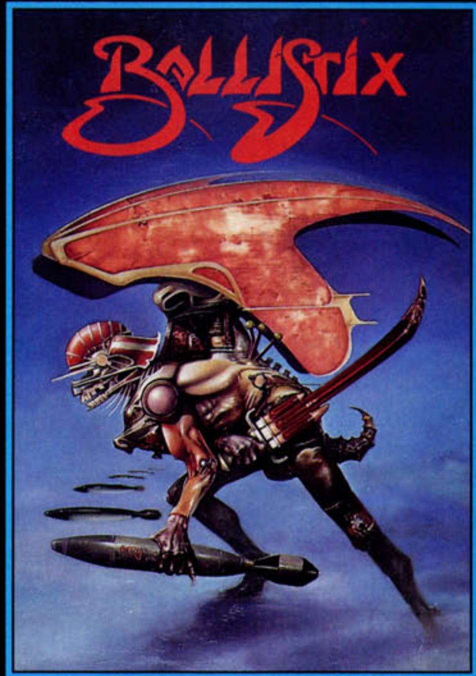
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Screen Shots from the Atari ST version

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CAPTAIN FIZZ
Meets The Blaster-Trons

The message is simple: co-operate or die!
It's double fun and double trouble all the way in Captain Fizz, the most exciting simultaneous two-player game you and a friend are ever likely to play. It's a whole new world of split-screen, high-speed action, as both of you take on the nasty Blaster-Trons infesting the planet Icarus.

Yup, it's a tough mission alright, but you might just win out with the right blend of co-operation, courage, laser-hot reflexes, tactical sense. . . and brains. The action is fast and furious in Captain Fizz, but if you can't work out the right tactics you'll both be dead meat.

There are 22 levels of savage and relentless action to battle through before you reach your objective, the central computer that's causing the evil infestation. You'll never get there, though, unless you put your heads together and co-operate; your buddy can't do it on his own, and neither can you. This is one program where even the easy games are hard. So remember — united you stand, but divided you fall. . .

Warning: this game is impossible to beat on your own.

Two joysticks required for two-player game.

Screen shots taken from the Atari ST version

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The aim of the game is simple; score more goals than your opponent to win the match. Doing it is a different matter as **splitters** fill the screen with dozens of balls, **tunnels** hide them from view, **bumpers** bounce balls all over the show, fiendish **red arrows** speed them up to almost impossible velocity, **magnets** pull them away from your control, and much, much more.

Ballistix is incredibly flexible, too. You can play against the computer or another player, set the speed if you can't stand the pace, define where the balls are fired and their velocity, rack up bonuses that will get you extra goals and then, at the end of an exhausting game, set your name in pride of place on the high-score table. And it's all played to the accompaniment of a throbbing sound-track and a crowd that applauds your every goal.

Ballistix is definitely not a game for wimps. It's tough, fast, challenging and incredibly competitive - in fact, it's just the kind of game you like.

Two joysticks required for two-player game

Screen Shots are from the Amiga version

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Unparalleled Conflict

SSG's "MacArthur's War"

By Jay C. Selover

MacArthur's War is the umpteenth release from **SSG** using their "Battlefront system". Well, maybe umpteen is a bit of an exaggeration, but *MacArthur's War* does follow the footsteps of four prior releases designed around the same system (*Battlefront, Battles In Normandy, Halls of Montezuma* and *Rommel*). Even though the *Battlefront* system is now three years old, with only minor modifications having been made through the series of releases, it has held up well. The game system is designed to place the players in the role of a Corps commander in an operational-level simulation of a battle or series of engagements (of up to twenty-five days in length).

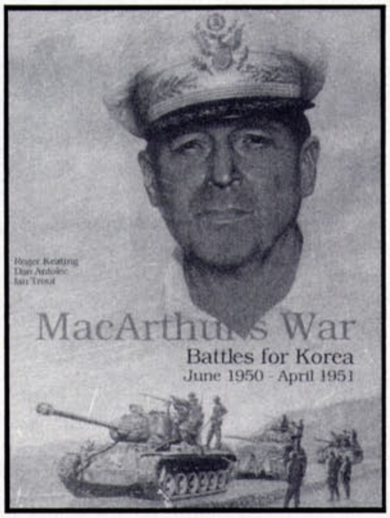
As usual with all SSG games, there is a set of editing subroutines which allow players to modify the existing scenarios or design their own from scratch. This scenario design capability is completely open-ended; one can create units in any of fourteen categories and change combat strengths, movement capabilities, experience levels, and all other operational parameters. Scenarios can include any map one chooses to design and there is also a graphics editor which allows creation or modification of the terrain icons on the screen (make your "hill" hexes look more like real hills if you want). As usual with games in the *Battlefront* family, purchasing any one gives you the freedom to design limitless scenarios on any modern combat situation.

With the availability of such freedom to "design your own", why do people buy more than one entry from the *Battlefront* series? Here we get to the true differentiation between the games which have been released - the predesigned scenarios included in each. *MacArthur's War* includes eight scenarios from the Korean War, and although one could have theoretically created them all by looking up enough source material and using the scenario design utility, there is no doubt that few players could have produced such well-researched designs.

The names of the scenarios will likely not be familiar unless one is a devotee of the topic; "Across the 38th", Taejon, Naktong Bulge, Unsan, Chongchon, Chosin Reservoir, Chipyong, and Imjin. They do, however, represent a good cross section of the actions occurring from the start of hostilities in June, 1950, through spring of 1951. Notably lacking from the selection is a scenario on the Inchon landings. Unfortunately, this scenario was already presented in the prior SSG release, *Halls of Montezuma* (along with another scenario on the Pusan perimeter), so players who really want to play out this battle are faced with purchase of another game (I would much rather have seen the Inchon scenario included as a "bonus" ninth scenario in *MacArthur's War*).

If there is any tarnish on the spit-shine of *MacArthur's War*, it is a certain "sameness" about the scenarios which is inevitably dictated by the nature of the conflict. Let me briefly describe several of the scenarios. "Across the 38th": hordes of NKPA troops roll over untrained ROK forces. Taejon: Task Force Smith attempts to delay and withdraw before a horde of NKPA troops. Naktong Bulge: a small force of well-supported Marines tries to dislodge a horde of NKPA troops from Obong-ni ridge. Unsan: II Corps of the ROK gets chopped up by a horde of Chinese troops while hoping the 1st Cavalry arrives. Chosin Reservoir: a small force of Marines holds defensive positions against hordes (and here I mean real HORDES) of Chinese troops. Chipyong: the U.S. 2nd Division holds out against hordes of Chinese and NKPA troops, hoping for relief from 5th Cavalry. You get the idea! Of course, most of the battles during this period did proceed along those lines; the vast numbers employed by NKPA and PRoC forces were the one constant factor in Korea.

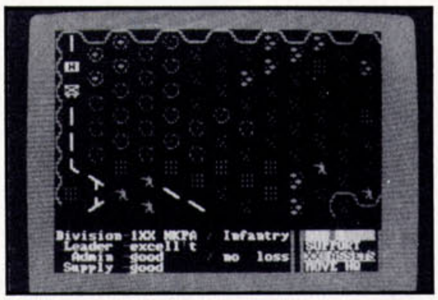
MacArthur's War uses the *Battlefront* system with its latest set of refinements (virtually unchanged from *Rommel*). The system uses four turns per day (three day turns and one night turn) and scales from 500m to 8km per hex to simulate Corps level actions. In *MacArthur's War*, these actions involve U.N., U.S., and South Korean (ROK) troops on one side, and North Korean (NKPA) and Chinese (PRoC) troops on the other.



The system sets up the player as a Corps commander with up to three divisions under his command. Each division can consist of up to four regiments plus four independently attachable battalions (each regiment itself is composed of up to four individual battalions). Even though the system uses battalions as the units of maneuver, the player cannot directly control their maneuvers. Rather, the player issues commands to divisions and regiments which are then interpreted and acted upon by subordinates (whose role is filled by the computer), resulting in the actual movement and combat of units on the map.

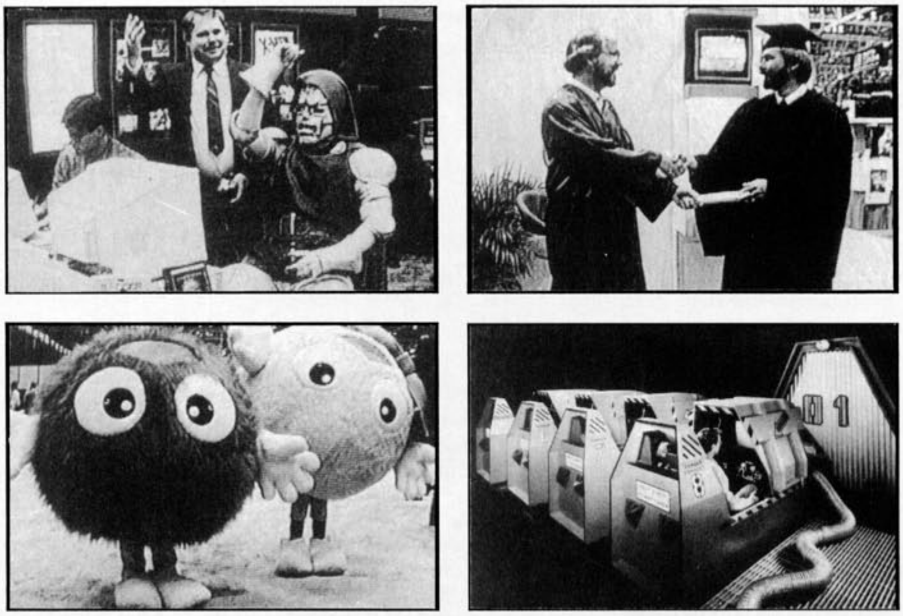
TITLE:	MacArthur's War: Battles for Korea, June 1950-April 1951
SYSTEMS:	Apple II, C-64/128
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$40.00
DESIGNERS:	Roger Keating, Dan Antolec, and Ian Trout
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Studies Group Walnut Creek, CA

As in the previous releases, the system places significant importance on factors such as supply, fatigue, and regimental cohesion; items which the player need not worry about administering, but which must be considered when deciding which troops to commit to battle and which are in need of rest. Such diverse factors as realistic air support, weather effects, experience levels, and leadership effects make the system quite capable of simulating combat on an operational level.



Despite the tremendous sweep of the maneuvers during the first year, Korea has never been a "pretty" war and has always been seriously under-represented in wargaming. This alone makes *MacArthur's War* almost a "must". That the game is a darn good simulation, is easy to learn, and gives you a real feeling for the capabilities and operational limitations of both sides is just an added bonus. **CGW**

sion among team members, and climaxed with an intense 10 minute first-person battle experience in the cockpit). Each cockpit has about $27,000 worth of hardware tied up in three proprietary computers plus one **Amiga** system to run the display screens in a full 256 color palette. The game surrounds the player in a sophisticated version of **Activision**'s *MechWarrior* game. **FASA/ESP Corp.** hopes to place 170 Battletech Centers across the country. The product has already been licensed for distribution in Japan.



Clockwise from upper left: ***Paragon****'s Doctor Doom crushes another innocent victim. / Gary Carlston of* ***Broderbund*** *congratulates Robert Garriott on* ***Origin****'s "graduation" to Independent Publisher status. /* ***FASA/ESP****'s Battletech Center. / "Great Balls of Fur!" / All photos except lower right courtesy of Computer Gaming Videomagazine.*

"I Can See Clearly Now" (Graphics)

On the **Amiga** front, **Taito** began releasing its personal computer versions of coin-op games with actual graphic files from the arcade versions. Now, **Melbourne House** is guaranteeing identical **Amiga** versions to several of their coin-op hits. These games will require a megabyte of RAM, but can accomplish the feat because the coin-op games were built for their sister company, **Arcadia Systems**, to run on **Amiga** boards within the coin-op cabinets. By the end of summer, *Rick Davis's World Trophy Soccer* and *Magic Johnson's Basketball* (similar to the recently released *Magic Johnson's Fast Break Basketball*) will be released.

On the **IBM PC** and compatible front, the industry is moving toward heavy use of VGA graphics. **Data East**'s *ABC Monday Night Football* license, **Broderbund**'s *Wolf Pack* (WWII Submarine Simulation), **Accolade**'s *Conspiracy*, **Sublogic**'s *UFO*, and **Mindscape**'s *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* all utilize beautiful VGA graphics (see page 32 for other VGA products). Most companies are still backwardly compatible with CGA being the lowest common denominator (Hercules Monochrome in other cases), but VGA is rapidly becoming the high end in entertainment graphics.

Another graphics trend seen at the show is the use of digitized images or live models. **Activision** contracted for permission to digitize images from the film in their *Die Hard* and *Ghostbusters II* action games, **Accolade** used over 500 digitized images for their *Conspiracy: The Deadlock Files* espionage adventure, and **Dynamix** used live models, props, make-up, etc. to set up their unique look for the story portion of *David Wolf—Secret Agent*. The combat sequences in **Origin**'s *Windwalker* (*Moebius II*) are based on work with live models and some of the static faces are digitized versions of faces from ancient papyri.

Good Vibrations (Sound)

Owners of PC Compatibles will be thrilled to know that there is considerable support for several sound formats. Almost every publisher we spoke to was supporting the **Ad Lib** board and **Covox** *Sound Machine*. In addition, many companies were supporting the **Innovation** board and most top line products supported the **Roland MT-32**. Several programmers stated that they wanted to support "every board out there," but that it was not always practical. **Access Software** has developed a remarkable software process, *Real Sound*, which is very effective on several compatibles (depending on speaker placement), but almost doubles the code required on the downside.

License to Sell

Licensed products continue to be popular. **Activision** has a first-person military simulation from **FASA**'s *BattleTech* system, entitled *Mech Warrior* and involving some strategic planning, as well. **Strategic Simulations, Inc.** is busily preparing *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, a CRPG sequel to the novel (*Azure Bonds*) and the pen-and-paper module based on the novel. The game adds the Paladin and Ranger classes and allows characters to be transferred from *Pool of Radiance* and/or *Hillsfar*. By the year's end, **SSI** will add David Landrey's *War of the Lance* (a fantasy wargame set in the *Dragonlance* world), *Sword of Aragon* (a fantasy wargame with role-playing flavor), and *Dragons of Flame* (an action game from **U.S. Gold**, but not *Heroes of the Lance II*).

Film and television licenses continue to abound. In addition to **Mindscape**'s *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (an adventure game with action sequences), **Taito** has developed *Rambo III* (an action game similar to *Gauntlet* in the first two missions and a tank game in the third, but with more puzzles to be solved than their previous games); **Broderbund** is marketing **Domark**'s *Licence To Kill* (an arcade game with six levels; **Activision** has *Die Hard* and *Ghostbusters II* (heavy action emphasis in both); **Microillusions** has successfully duplicated the feel of the **Hanna-Barbara** cartoon shows with *Scooby Doo* (four adventures with graphics and interface reminiscent of *Maniac Mansion*, *Jonny Quest* (a linear adventure game using a series of mini-quests), and *Flintstones* (an interactive cartoon with large characters that look actual size); **Lucasfilm** was demonstrating *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* in both its graphic adventure (see Sneak Preview on pages 16 and 22) and action game formats; and **Intracorp** has prepared *Superman* and *Miami Vice* (both with eight levels of arcade action) for mid-summer release on the Atari ST. **Cinemaware** isn't working from a license, but their '50s era "B" horror flick adventure *It Came From Out Of The Desert* is somewhat a parody of the "B" movies of that time, particularly "Them" and "Invaders From Mars". Ken Melville, a professional screenwriter, wrote the "screenplay" for the game. His effort shows (Good plot & subplots).

Book licenses can also be popular. **In-**

terplay will ship the IBM and Amiga versions of William Gibson's Nebula award-winning *Neuromancer* this summer and **Intracorp** says they have inked a pact for computer game rights to Tom Clancy's *Cardinal of the Kremlin*. Brand-name licenses seem strong, as well. **Spectrum Holobyte** should have *Vette!* ready by Fall. *Vette!* is a 3-D driving game where players race a Corvette through the busy (and extremely detailed) streets of San Francisco. **Mindscape** licensed the **Harley Davidson** brand for *Harley Davidson: The Road to Sturgis*. Our sources tell us that the "Harley" folks' image of themselves is not equivalent to that of popular culture. Some of the sequences in this action game with an adventure wrapping were taken from actual events at biker rallies, but had to be changed because the "Harley" folks didn't like the image.

"Back In Time"

As usual, adventure games figure prominently in the mix of products which were shown (or discussed). Three games currently under development involve time travel: **Broderbund**'s *Where In Time Is Carmen Sandiego?*, **Activision**'s *Time Raft*, and **Interplay**'s *Mean Time* (not shown). Three games involve the Arthurian legend: **Sierra**'s *Conquests of Camelot* (from scriptwriter Christy Marx of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* fame), *Spirit of Excalibur* from **Melbourne House** (the same basic interface and graphics from *War In Middle Earth*, but with more depth promised), and **Infocom**'s *Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur* (using the *Journey* style).

Other adventure games to surface in the next six months include: **Avalon Hill**'s *Legends of the Lost Realms* (a CRPG on the Mac in which players travel through an 84 level maze to recover five missing magician kings); **Broderbund** hopes to release *Dark Heart of Uukrul* and Michael Cranford's *Centauri Alliance* before the end of the year; **Kyodai** will ship the action/adventure *Ancient Lands of Ys* with its 100 hours of gameplay by Fall and has a PG-Rated mystery game called *Murder Club* (which combines graphics and text elements) which should release very soon; **Interplay** plans to capture the Apple II with 128K market with their hi-res graphic CRPG which utilizes a combat system similar to *Champions* and 250 off-line paragraphs similar to *Wasteland, Dragon Wars*; **Accolade** will ship *The Third Courier* (an espionage game by Ivan and Carol Manley which develops character attributes by creating a character history) and *Don't Go Alone* (a contemporary horror adventure where characters cannot die, but can go crazy and scientific formulae are used instead of spells); **Origin**'s *Knights of Legend* is potentially the deepest CRPG we have seen to date (even competitors noted this) and their *Space Rogue* tries to hit both the flight simulator market (the designer worked with Ned Lerner of *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* fame at an earlier point) and science fiction fans; and **Epyx** has adapted Robert Moranes, a French super spy game, into *Project Neptune* (called *Undersea Commando*).

Perhaps the most unique adventure game we saw was **Lucasfilm**'s *Loom*. Brian Moriarity, designer of *Trinity* and *Beyond Zork* for **Infocom**, has developed a game with a musical interface, philosophical storyline, imaginative environment, intriguing mythos, and fabulous graphics by Mark Ferrari (fantasy artist who executed many of the *Cthulhu* materials for **Chaosium**). The radio play, which is packaged with the game and introduces the game's story and universe, is fabulous.

Overbooked

Of course, one never counts on the flight being overbooked. Not only was our return flight to Orange County overbooked, but so was this issue of CGW. So, next issue we will continue our Consumer Electronics Show coverage with notes on Sports and Military Simulations.

CGW

(Continued from page 16)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

the action sequences, the designers have optimized all the action interfaces for the keyboard.

Perhaps, it is most significant that players have a chance of winning the game with a rating even more efficient than Indy's actions in the movie script. Some will wonder how there even *is* a game in a product based on a movie script. The designers admit that about 80% of the plot elements from the film are in the game, but note that only about 20% of the puzzle elements in the game came directly from the movie. The Games Division believes that there are actually *better* endings than the one utilized the movie script and the project team feels that the game allows a better chance of attaining those optimal endings. In fact, the designers suggest that players will be able to get a higher score by solving the mental puzzles placed throughout the game.

The graphics to this game are an improvement over previous graphic adventures from **Lucasfilm**. Both *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and *Loom* (a fantasy role playing adventure from Brian Moriarity to be released in the Fall) utilized hi-resolution graphics on the IBM for the first time in a **Lucasfilm** graphic adventure. The graphics use a 16 color EGA palette, but the dithered effect used by the artist offers a feeling that there are more colors utilized. Further, the three-dimensional oblique overhead view utilized in the catacombs is magnificent. The character icon meanders through the tombs and the screen is dark except for the small portion of the oblique-view screen which lights up in proportion to the light from Indy's flashlight. The effect is very effective, as is the top-down view of Castle Brunwaldt's interior.

The game play, except for the endgame, flows at a leisurely pace with nice humor (Don't miss the plaques and books in the ancient library!) and intriguing puzzles. We liked the puzzle which used a combination of three statues much like a Rubik's Cube in order to open a passageway. We also liked the humor surrounding the puzzle in the Berlin Airport.

The endgame, with its climactic scenes in the Grail Temple, utilizes time constraints with no possible saves. This simulates Indy's dilemma in the film and does it effectively.

It is interesting to note that on at least one occasion the game includes a scene that was edited out of the movie. When, on the Zeppelin, Indy says to his father, "I didn't think they would fix the radio so soon", the scene to which Indy refers, (his "destruction" of the radio), was removed from the film. Only players of the Indy computer game get to see this scene.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade is a project which offered significant risk to **Lucasfilm**. Previous games based on films, with the possible exceptions of *The Three Stooges, Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* and *Aliens*, have experienced significant sales resistance because they did not advance the motion picture experience. If ever a company tried to move beyond the movie itself and add to the enjoyment of both film and game, however, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* certainly has. **CGW**



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Computer Gaming Wo

The Categories

Strategy (ST): Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem solving.

Simulation (SI): Games based on first person perspectives of real world environments.

Adventure (AD): Games that allow you to take your alter ego through a storyline or series of events.

Role-Playing Adventures (RP): Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).

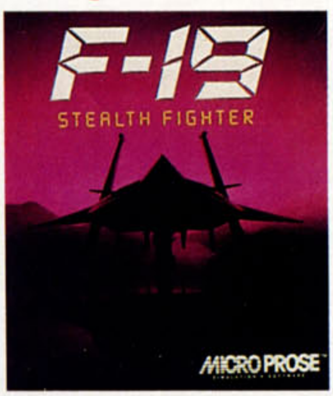
Wargames (WG): Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.

Action/Arcade (AC): Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.

Top Role-Playing



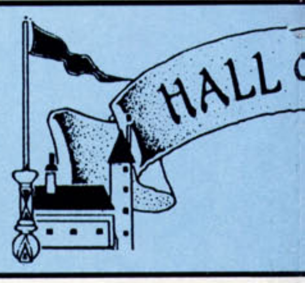
Top Simulation



No.	Name	Mfg	Machine	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
1.	**Dungeon Master**	**FTL**	**ST,GS,Am**	**RP**	**95**	**10.76**
2.	**F-19 Stealth Fighter**	**MicPr**	**I**	**SI**	**72**	**10.01**
3.	**The Magic Candle**	**Mndcrft**	**Ap,I**	**RP**	**20**	**9.90**
4.	**Romance/3 Kngdms**	**Koei**	**I**	**ST,RP**	**23**	**9.61**
5.	**Ultima V**	**Origin**	**Ap,I**	**RP**	**110**	**9.56**

No.	Name	Mfg	Machine	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
11.	Bard's Tale III	EA	Ap,C,	RP	84	9.18
	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	Ap,C	WG	33	9.18
13.	Airborne Ranger	MicPr	C,I	AC	94	9.17
14.	Genghis Khan	Koei	I	ST,RP	29	9.14
15.	Pool of Radiance	SSI	Ap,C,I	RP	97	9.03
16.	Battlechess	Intrply	Am,I	ST	43	8.98
	King's Quest IV	Sierra	I,GS,ST	AD	61	8.98
18.	NFL Challenge	XOR	I,M	ST	86	8.87
19.	Rocket Ranger	Cnmwre	Am,C,I	AC,AD	90	8.86
20.	Neuromancer	Intrply	Ap,C	AD	31	8.84
21.	Battletech	Infocom	Am,I	RP	48	8.77
	Fire Brigade	Panther	Am,I,M	WG	22	8.77
	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	Ap,C	WG	56	8.77
24.	Falcon	SpHlbyte	Many	SI	61	8.73
25.	688 Attack Sub	EA	I	SI,ST	45	8.67
	Hostage	Mndscpe	Am,ST,I	AC	26	8.67
27.	Police Quest II	Sierra	I,GS	AD	43	8.65
	Zany Golf	EA	Am,I,ST	AC	31	8.65
29.	Jack Nicklaus' Golf	Acclde	C,I	AC,ST	28	8.64
30.	Sword of Sodan	Discvry	Am,GS	AC	27	8.63
31.	Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	I	ST,RP	51	8.53
32.	Carrier Command	Rainbrd	Am,ST,I	AC,WG	49	8.51
	Panzer Strike	SSI	Ap,C	WG	68	8.51
34.	Silent Service	MicPr	Many	SI	257	8.50
35.	TV Sports Football	Cnmwre	Am	AC,ST	51	8.49
36.	Arkanoid	Dsc/Taito	Many	AC	69	8.38
	Wings of Fury	Brdbnd	Ap	AC	52	8.38
38.	Strike Fleet	EA	Ap,C,I	WG	79	8.37
39.	Leisure Suit Larry II	Sierra	I,GS,ST	AD	52	8.31
40.	Modem Wars	EA	C,I	ST	24	8.29
41.	Manhunter	Sierra	Many	AD	72	8.25
42.	Police Quest	Sierra	Many	AD	98	8.23
43.	Starglider II	Rainbrd	Am,ST	AC	65	8.22
44.	Three Stooges	Cnmwre	Am,C	AC	68	8.21
45.	Battlegroup	SSI	Ap,C	WG	36	8.19
46.	Abrams Battle Tank	EA	I	AC,SI	31	8.16
47.	Tetris	SpHlbyte	Many	AC,ST	46	8.13
48.	Stealth Mission	Sublogic	C	SI	36	8.11
49.	Shiloh	SSI	Ap,C,I	WG	54	8.09
	Zork Series	Infocom	Many	AD	218	8.09
51.	Faery Tale Adv.	Micrill	Many	RP	59	8.07
52.	Russia	SSG	Ap,C	WG	61	8.05
53.	Sentinel Worlds	EA	I	RP	71	8.04
	Techno-Cop	Epyx	C	AC	23	8.04
55.	WC Leader Board	Access	Many	AC,ST	97	8.00

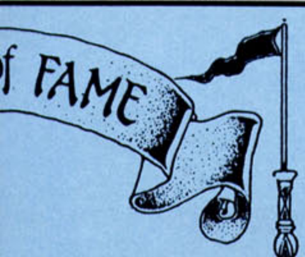
Be it known to all gentle persons that the named games on these rolls have been well spoken of by our readers over a goodly period of time. Therefore they have been enshrined in the CGW Hall of Fame as games of renown and worthy of play by all



orld's Top 100 Games

No.	Name	Mfg	Machine	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
6.	**Red Storm Rising**	**MicPr**	**C,I**	**SI,ST**	**48**	**9.47**
7.	**Wasteland**	**EA**	**Ap,C,I**	**RP**	**116**	**9.47**
8.	**Project Stealth Ftr.**	**MicPr**	**C**	**SI**	**26**	**9.44**
9.	**Battlehawks 1942**	**Lucsflm**	**I,Am,ST**	**AC,SI**	**57**	**9.43**
10.	**Might & Magic II**	**NwWrld**	**Ap**	**RP**	**47**	**9.24**

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machine	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
56.	Leather Goddesses	Infocom	Many	AD	136	7.99
57.	Breach	Omntrnd	ST,Am,M	ST,RP	114	7.98
58.	Enchanter	Infocom	Many	AD	115	7.97
59.	Jordan vs. Bird	EA	C,I	AC	47	7.96
60.	Wizardry V	Sir-Tech	Ap,I	RP	43	7.88
61.	Eternal Dagger	SSI	Many	RP	72	7.85
62.	Rommel	SSG	Ap,C	WG	20	7.80
63.	Halls of Montezuma	SSG	Ap,C,I	WG	44	7.75
64.	Anc.Art War Sea	Brdbnd	I	ST,WG	108	7.74
	Phantasie III	SSI	Many	RP	105	7.74
66.	Phantasie	SSI	Many	RP	147	7.69
	Star Saga I	MstrPly	Many	AD	41	7.66
68.	War in Middle Earth	Mlbrne	Many	ST,AD	57	7.65
69.	Bard's Tale II	EA	Many	RP	166	7.64
70.	Grand Prix	Acclde	I	AC	46	7.63
71.	Sorcerer	Infocom	Many	AD	71	7.62
	Spellbreaker	Infocom	Many	AD	93	7.62
	Wizard's Crown	SSI	Ap,C,I	RP	133	7.62
74.	Dec. Battles III	SSG	Ap,C	WG	23	7.57
	Hitchhiker's Gde.	Infocom	Many	AD	198	7.57
76.	Demon Stalkers	EA	C	AC,AD	57	7.54
77.	Shadowgate	Mndscpe	Am,I,M	AD	66	7.53
78.	Quarterstaff	Infocom	M	RP	23	7.52
	Wishbringer	Infocom	Many	AD	81	7.52
80.	Legacy Ancients	EA	Ap,C	RP	134	7.50
81.	Planetfall	Infocom	Many	AD	139	7.49
82.	Battlecruiser	SSI	Ap,At,C	WG	42	7.48
83.	Reach for Stars	SSG	Many	ST	38	7.45
84.	Autoduel	Origin	Ap	RP	175	7.44
85.	Bard's Tale	EA	Many	RP	81	7.43
	Heroes of Lance	SSI	C,I,ST	AC,AD	77	7.43
	King's Quest II	Sierra	Many	AD	115	7.43
88.	Defender of Crown	Cnmwre	Many	AC,ST	253	7.39
	Steel Thunder	Acclde	C	AC,SI	41	7.39
90.	Lode Runner	Brdbnd	Many	AC	124	7.36
91.	Micro League BB	MicLg	Many	ST	137	7.32
92.	Zak McKracken	Lucsflm	I	AD	48	7.31
93.	Times of Lore	Origin	Ap	RP	63	7.29
94.	Crusade in Europe	MicPr	Ap,At,C	WG	81	7.25
	No. Atlantic '86	SSI	Ap,M	WG	40	7.25
	Paladin	Omnitr	Am,ST	ST,RP	71	7.25
	Space M+A+X	Final Fr.	I	ST	28	7.25
	Star Fleet I	Interstel	Many	ST	177	7.25
	War in So. Pacific	SSI	Ap,C	WG	53	7.25
100.	PT-109	SpHolo	M	SI	36	7.22



Strategy

Kampfgruppe
Gettysburg
M.U.L.E.
Mech Brigade
Chessmaster
War in Russia
Empire
Earl Weaver Baseball

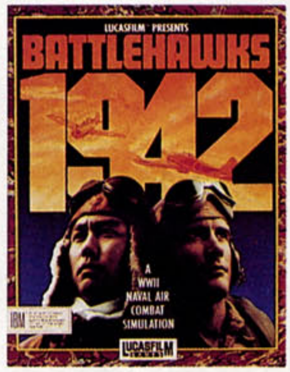
Action/Adventure

Ultima IV
Wizardry
Starflight
Gunship
Ultima III
Might & Magic
Bard's Tale
Pirates

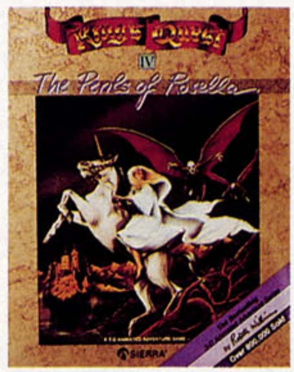
Top Strategy



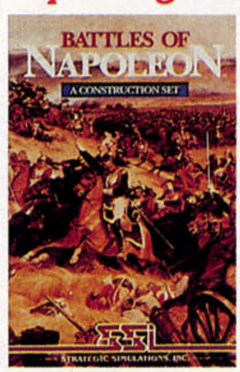
Top Action/Arcade



Top Adventure



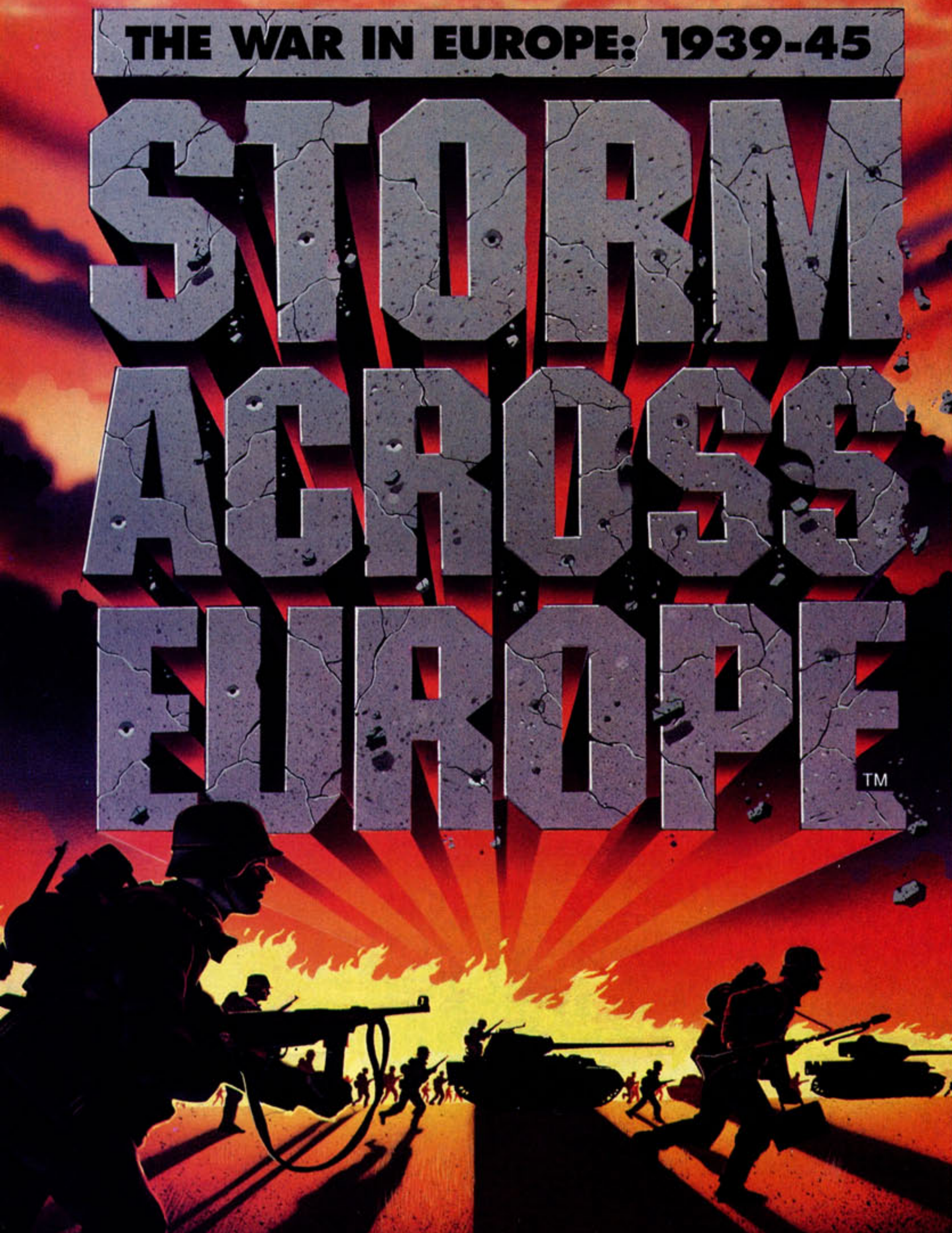
Top Wargame



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Sniper!

Telecommuting to War

by Johnny L. Wilson

As I crawled through the window and prepared to launch an assault on my opponent's back, the only sound to be heard was my own heartbeat and the distant clicking of my computer keys. *I slipped quietly around the corner, slinking cat-like until I spotted his unsuspecting figure silhouetted against the window.* There he was, a brightly illuminated upper case letter. *I opened up with my semi-automatic rifle and the enemy fell backward, an obscene fountain of crimson gushing from his chest.* His letter was reduced to lower case and its luminosity faded. *My radio crackled as a hostile message assaulted my ears.* The screen printed, "RA3: Sneaky dog!" *A torrent of verbiage escaped me in response.* I rapidly typed "/RA 3 Turn about, you know, fair play!" *The radio crackled again,* "RA3: What would you know about fair play?" printed on my monitor screen and brought a chuckle to my throat.



TITLE:	Sniper!
SYSTEMS:	Compuserve Information Network
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$12.50 per hr. - 1200-2400 baud; $6 per hr. - 300 baud
DESIGNER:	Steve Estvanik
PUBLISHER:	Compuserve Columbus, OH

Sniper!, **Compuserve**'s telecommunications version of the popular **TSR** board game (man-to-man combat in World War II), does *not* seem, at first glance, like it would be as interesting or addictive as it actually is. Initially, the use of text characters to simulate a game map and counters caused me to feel like I was playing a public domain version of a board game translated to the computer. Once I started to play, however, I discovered a new universe of gaming. Since, in *Sniper*, players compete against what Dan Bunten calls the "Real I" (human intelligence), as opposed to "AI" (artificial intelligence), there are plenty of surprises. Since the mainframe computer back in Columbus handles the "stack" of orders, there is seldom any lag time, players are almost constantly entering commands. Because of the way the mainframe handles the "stack," there is no real advantage for users at higher baud rates over the lower baud users (this problem occurs in *Islands of Kesmai* and other telegames from time to time). Further, since the "/RAdio" command allows players to communicate with each other, there is a comradery that develops (especially among regular opponents). Indeed, some players will use the "/REcon" command to scout prospective opponents by observing a game prior to playing them and several players will "debrief" at "Steve's Saloon and Salad Bar" (the meeting area for the game) to discuss tactics, dispense congratulations, or fling insults after the games.

In addition, the intensity of each game is enhanced by the fact that players earn rank points for each mission they play and these points apply toward a promotion. Whenever a player enters the "saloon," he is identified by rank. This makes it simple to find an opponent at roughly the same skill level as oneself. It also offers an incentive to play well (and play *often*). The most effective players are listed in an on-line Hall of Fame which further increases the incentive to perform well.

Players type in commands for their men using "/xx" commands like /MO for "Move," /SI for "Sight," /FI for "Fire," and /EV for "Evade." The object of the game is usually to survive while wreaking havoc upon the enemy. In "Patrol" scenarios, one must have his men touch the opponent's baseline (Victory Point Area) and return to his own baseline without being destroyed. In "Infiltrate" scenarios, one squad tries to get past the enemy's baseline, while the other tries to stop him. Naturally, one wants to "waste" as many of his opponents as possible while keeping his own casualties to a minimum.

The program determines line of sight (LOS) and does not allow the opposing player's men to appear on the screen until they are visible to one's own men. Even though the terrain is marked by ASCII characters, players will learn how to use stone walls (o), exterior walls (#), hedges (n) and rough areas (@ and &) to their advantage. These terrain features not only affect LOS, but they also affect the potential for hitting and causing damage. Some of the more experienced players on the system (D.J. II and Leinafets, for example, watch out for them) actually play solo games in which they switch sides back and forth in order to scout machine gun positions and potential sites for ambushing opponents.

Although the game is addictive, challenging, and stimulating as it now stands, one of the best points to on-line games is that they can be revised without having to send an update to every player. Once the software at the mainframe is updated, everyone plays the new version.

Here are a few of the changes which this reviewer would like to see implemented. First, since the game is keyboard driven, it would be nice to have a "Repeat last action" macro. This could save lots of keystrokes. Second, it would be nice to order units to fire immediately upon sighting the enemy. The problem is that once soldier #6 sights one or more active enemy units, a separate /DS ("Display Sighting") command must be typed in before one can know where the potential target actually is. Third, it would be very helpful if players could define macros for the most used commands ("Move," "Sprint," "Sight," and "Fire") rather than having to input the three keystrokes plus unit number plus direction each and every time an order to given.

Sniper! on **Compuserve** is a fascinating social experience and stimulating competition. It has certainly changed this reviewer's mind about "real-time" games (I used to hate them!). Now, instead of being a quiche-eater (see CGW #56, p. 35), I'm ready to take command on a "real-time" battlefield. Now, where's that Modem Player's Challenge Guide (An On-Line Directory of Opponents for Telegamers provided by **Compuserve**)? **CGW**

Buddy Knight is a 1981 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD. As a reserve naval officer, he is currently employed as a weapons systems quality/reliability assurance engineer for a major defense contractor. He disclaims any use of classified U.S. documents in preparation of this review.

OVERRUN!

Strategic Simulations' Simulation of Modern Warfare

By Buddy Knight

Breathing hard, you peer over the rubble in front of you toward the opposing hill. The shelling has finally stopped, and the sound of enemy armor is getting louder. Your own artillery's counterbattery fire sails overhead, piercing the sky with a sound like ripping silk.

Suddenly, the tanks and APC's appear from the trees, racing toward you and your men. Grabbing the radio microphone, you lean against the muddy wall of your foxhole and order the anti-tank units to fire while your second-in-command calls in the assault helos.

The Battle Begins!

The scene described above could have occurred in any of the world's trouble spots of the past couple of decades or might yet happen in the Europe or Mid-East of the 1990's. Now, wargamers can try their own hand at a modern land warfare simulation fought at battalion/regimental-level. In *Overrun!*, players experience the fine art of command and control. The game system itself is derived from the *Panzer Strike/Typhoon of Steel* system, with modifications made due to the technological advances of the past 50 years. Additions include helicopters, reactive armor, HEAT vs. Kinetic Energy weapons, thermal sights, and non-line of sight weaponry. Forces are available from the U.S., the U.K., France, West Germany, Israel, Iraq, Iran, the Arab states, the Warsaw Pact, and the Soviet Union. Combat may be simulated for the '56, '67, '73, and later Arab-Israeli conflicts as well as near-future European conflict. With some effort, almost any land battle in the past 35 years, either real or hypothetical, can be simulated. The game, which comes with a disk for each theater of operations (Europe and the Middle East), is a feast of detail and delight for raw recruits to wargames and veteran gamers alike.



TITLE:	Overrun!
SYSTEMS:	Apple II, C-64/128
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Gary Grigsby
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Simulations, Inc. Mountain View, CA

The game scale is small, with each icon representing either a single vehicle or a single squad/team and each turn representing one minute of combat. The units available are varied and numerous. SSI has resisted the temptation of loading the game up with only the latest and greatest in killing machines. Each side, whether Red or Blue, has an assortment of platforms and weapons ranging from WWII holdovers to those being fielded in the next few years.

The battlefield is represented by a map consisting of up to 3600 squares in a 40 x 90 layout. This grid of squares, each of which denotes a 50 yd. x 50 yd. area, can contain any of 60 terrain types. Also, combat can *change* the terrain. Weapons fire can change a building to either a burning building or a pile of rubble. Trees and fields can be set afire, with the appropriate effect on field of view and movement. Finally, artillery can create large depressions in the ground, which can slow you down at the most inopportune time.

Command and Control

As in the real world, plans rarely survive first contact with the enemy intact. However, it is paramount that the commander have a firm idea of how he is to employ his forces so as to maximize the use of the (relatively) few orders available. Complicating this is the fact that, while all units have radios, they can randomly be made "Out of Command/Control", simulating the effects of enemy jamming and the fact that things and people just get confused at times.

Just as losing your head can have a disastrous personal effect on you, losing an HQ can result in turning the tide of a battle. When a formation HQ is destroyed, *all* units in that formation are transferred to computer control for the remainder of the scenario. Then, they execute orders according to the computer's battle plan, not yours. For this reason, it is wise to protect you HQ's. Should an HQ which also has subordinate HQ's under it be destroyed ALL of the subordinate HQ's will be out of command/control, although their subordinates will not be affected. This prevents the subordinate formations from utilizing the All-Units mode.

Advances!

Overrun! reflects many of the advances made in modern warfare since WWII. Gary Grigsby has incorporated helo-borne assaults, improved artillery systems, armour advances, air defense, and Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM's) into a signal package.

Air Assault: Helicopters have changed the nature of the battlefield. Serving as transports or roving marauders, these deadly craft can turn the tide in a battle. In OVERRUN!, a variety of different helos are available, including the new Soviet HAVOC attack chopper. Each helo can be armed with a wide range of weapons. Transport helos, such as the HIP of HUEY, can transport infantry squads and teams. There is no provision, however, for the airlift of vehicles.

Fire Support: The *Overrun!* system allows off-map artillery to change states, reflecting the improvements in fire-control and fire-detection. Each off-map artillery unit can be in one of four states: Off-Map, Destroyed, Relocating, or counter-battery. The relocating state simulates the act of physically relocating a unit to prevent successful counter-battery fire on the part of the enemy. Counter-battery fire may be ordered to attack an opponent's off-map artillery.

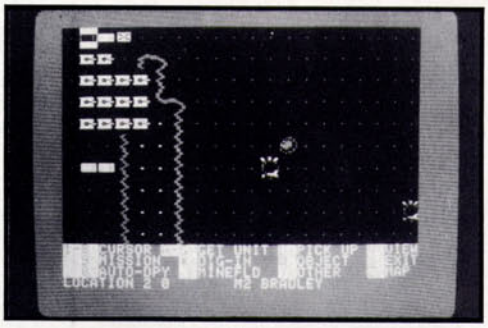
Armour: New advances in armour are reflected by the rating of each unit in terms of its resistance to either an Armour-Piercing (AP) or High Explosive-Anti-Tank (HEAT) attack. In addition, penetration is randomly adjusted to simulate striking the armour at an angle, which would increase the effective thickness of the armour. Reactive armour has also been included for some vehicles.

Air Defense: Both Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA) and Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (SAMS) are provided to defend against enemy

helos. The AAA systems are all self-propelled. SAMS are provided in both the mobile and (Afghan admired and Soviet feared) hand-held variety.

ATGM's: *Overrun!* contains all of the major ATGMS currently held by the armies represented. Proposed systems, such as the Fiber Optic Guided-Missile (FOG-M) are also supplied to gaze into the future. ATGMs may be used for anti-armour or assault purposes.

Overall, these new features to the *Panzer Strike* system allow the electronic warrior to simulate the problems encountered by today's combat commander.



Retreats!

Even though *Overrun!* is a superb simulation of modern land warfare, several "shots" appear to have missed the target. The first and foremost of these is the documentation, which is atypical of SSI. Some of these are:

1. Nowhere is the player told that helos will automatically shift to Fly Slow in order to fire. The fact that this occurs also contradicts the combat penalties listed for the various helo states.

2. Although FOG-M is said to be able to attack vehicles beyond the line-of-sight, the rules do not cover the criteria and adjustments for this capability.

3. Entire units are missing from the Order-of-Battle (Marine squad, LT-MG, and 60mm Mortar).

4. In the organization table for the Blue Mid-East force, the Marine Co and the LAV SPT PLT are mixed, effectively eliminating the LAV SPT PLT from the documentation.

5. Blue Mid-Est formation 31, the LAV-AT PLT, does not exist in the software.

8. Depending on whether you are in the European or Middle Eastern Theater, the M60A3 may or may not have thermal sights.

9. The Hummer is not available in Europe!

As for game play itself, the following problems may be noted:

Artillery: The human player can only change the state of his off-map artillery in all units mode and only when unit "0" is also an artillery piece. This is not in the documentation, and greatly handicaps you when playing the "Breakthrough at Neukirchen" scenario.

Unit Fire Control: In the game, the fire control characteristics are tied to the platform and *not* the weapon system mounted upon it. This results in some severe limitations.

With the air defense rating of a unit tied to the platform the player is prevented from constructing a Bradley-based ADATS unit (which is what the Army is currently buying) or placing Stingers on helos (which is also a contemporary effort). This restricts the player to only creating unit variations which do not change the overall nature of a unit (such as from an APC to a SAM platform).

Typing the fire control rating to the platform also results in the complete exclusion of FOG-M from the European Theater since no FOG-M platform is made available.

Reactive Armour: The game allows small arms fire to eliminate reactive armour boxes. While reactive armour would be affected, to a degree, by small caliber, rounds the equal weight given to an M-16 and a 120mm gun is not realistic.

Command and Control: As in *Panzer Strike*, once a formation HQ is destroyed, the rest of the formation is on their own. While this may (or may not) be true of Soviet, Warsaw Pact, and some Arab forces, it can hardly be considered fact among western armies. In actual combat, command and control would be re-established by the next unit down in the formation's chain of command. A much more realistic method would be to have a random delay before control was re-established, rather than jut chopping off the head.

Movement: Units in a formation will slow down if other members of the unit are fired upon. While this is realistic when units are closely grouped, it occurs here no matter how dispersed the formation is. One APC does not slow down just because another APC 2000 yards away takes some fire. Tanks being given individual orders do this even less. I had an ABRAMS killed while repositioning it because its partner was giving covering fire and receiving fire itself. It should have taken cover like I ordered it to at full speed (it was not heavily suppressed).

Missile Fire: Missiles can only be fired on the third pulse. This is my most serious objection to *Overrun!*. Limiting the time of firing totally negates the incredible utility of these weapons, especially ATGMs, by allowing the direct fire units to clobber the missile units. As a turn is supposed to simulate 60 seconds, it is unrealistic to assume that target acquisition and weapons loading take forty of those sixty seconds. A good ATGM team can fire very quickly indeed (or else they DIE)! A ATGM-equipped vehicle such as the M-901 ITOW, with its two ready rounds, can easily fire sooner than 40 second after target selection, not to mention the abilities of the Apache or Cobra! This, in my opinion, should have received more attention, even if it had meant delaying the release of the game. Finally, the SONGSTER gun/missile system of the T-64B and T-80 is not provided, although it is probably deployed.

Optics: *Overrun!* incorporates the advancement of thermal sights. However, not enough units have them (compared with the data to be found in standard references such as JANE'S). Night-fighting would have been nice, also, reflecting the challenges of the 24-hour battlefield. If the designers wanted to keep the distribution of thermal sights down in order to portray different eras, they could have included its selection in the construction set routines.

Combat Support

When I discovered the various anomalies in Version 1.0 of *Overrun!*, I provided SSI with a listing. They immediately set to work, seeking answers to my questions and investigating my findings. This is a credit to the professionalism of SSI's staff. Instead of hemming and hawing, SSI investigated each and every issue and provided a reply, both written and oral.

All of the documentation problems will be corrected in the next production run. SSI will exchange your original documentation once they have the new edition in stock. Likewise, Version 1.1 of the software will correct most of the problems/gripes and will also be available for exchange by sending the ORIGINAL disks in. The release dates for these updates are pending.

After-Action Report

All things taken together, *Overrun!* gives you your money's worth. I would heartily recommend buying a copy. None of the problems addressed above keep it from being a challenging, rewarding, and immensely enjoyable game. Veterans of Gray Grigsby's other games will find *Overrun!* to be on, or above, the level of *Mech Brigade*, a member of the CGW Hall of Fame. Raw recruits to the arena of computer wargames will quickly learn the ropes. *Overrun!* has my vote for Wargame Of The Year! **CGW**

Scorpion's Tale

So, here we are in the middle of summer again (doesn't it seem that this year is moving by rather quickly?). As usual, Fred is counting the days to next month's annual Grue Convention, so he's a little absent-minded right now. Wake up, Fred! We have some thirsty customers here! That's better. And now that you're settled in with refreshments at hand, we can delve a little into a mystery.

"The Scoop" is a murder mystery, set in the 1930's, and based on a novel written by members of the London Detection Club (an association of mystery writers, of course, headed by Agatha Christie). Since I don't have the book, I can't say how closely the game follows the novel or if reading it will be of any help in solving the game. However, from the way the adventure is set up, it's very likely that reading the book wouldn't be of too much assistance.

This is a graphic adventure, totally menu driven. You manipulate either a male or female figure (your choice) on the screen and use the available menu commands to perform actions such as examining objects, taking or dropping them, listening in on conversations (always fun!), etc.

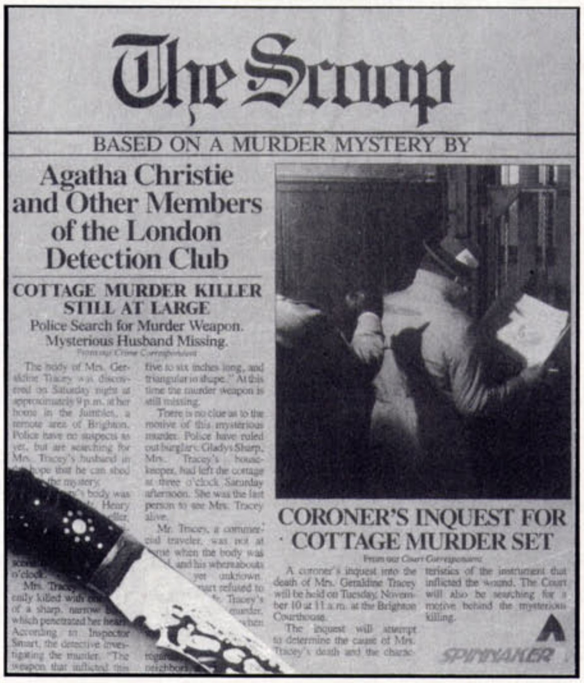
The Apple graphics, by the way, are done primarily as black and white drawings, with some color on the close-up pictures of people when you talk to them. Although simple in design, the close-ups manage to convey a surprising amount of personality.

Talking to people is also menu-driven and somewhat limited in form. You can ask what's on their mind, where they were on certain days, what they know (or think) of other people in the game, or you can show them an item from your inventory to see what their reactions will be. There is no way to bring up any other subjects or to question them on anything specific (new items do not appear on the menu as a result of conversations).

Okay, so here you are, hot-shot crime reporter for the *London Daily Courier*. Well, actually, maybe not so hot-shot, since you were just elevated to your new position from the cheery task of writing obituaries. Things are not good for the *Courier* these days. They've been losing too many good stories to the rival *Morning Star* and its top reporter, Denis Oliver.

You are the *Courier*'s last hope. If you can bring in a big "scoop," the paper will be saved. If not, well, you can go back to writing obituaries . . . provided, of course, the *Courier* stays in business (which is doubtful).

At the moment, all London is buzzing over the murder of one Geraldine Tracey, found stabbed to death in her bungalow in the suburbs of Brighton. Her husband, as well as the murder weapon, are suspiciously missing. Hmmm.



Nevertheless, this death is overshadowed by another. It seems the *Morning Star* sent a reporter to cover the story, and now he has just been found stabbed to death in a phone booth at Victoria Station. This is where the game begins.

Your boss, Mr. Wrightwell, sends you off on Monday night to see what's going on at the station. This is where you first meet Denis Oliver, as well as the Scotland Yard man in charge of the case, Inspector Smart.

Because of various time constraints (more on that in a bit), there isn't much you want to do here now except listen to the conversation between Smart and Oliver. After that, a quick trip home and a good night's rest are in order.

The game is heavily time-dependent in many ways. Travel, for example. You can take trains or buses to various destinations, but they always leave on the hour, and take one hour to reach wherever it is you're going. So if you arrive at Victoria Station at, say, 2:01 PM, you'll have to wait until 3 PM to catch the next train, which in turn will not arrive at its destination until 4 PM.

You also need to sleep, and this can be frustrating at times. The game will not let you go to bed before midnight, however much you may want to. Since you always sleep for seven hours, this means you can't get up any earlier than 7 AM. It also means that, if you go to bed later, you will get up later, and may miss something important in the game.

Characters in this game move around, they do not always stand in one spot waiting for you to show up. Also, certain items may or may not be in a certain location, depending on the day and time. Obviously, then, you will be doing a lot of running around hither and yon, so keeping an eye on the clock is of extreme importance.

That's why you want to go to bed early on Monday night. You can't afford to miss the inquest at Brighton on Tuesday morning. You meet several important suspects and get to hear their evidence in regard to the Tracey murder. This also opens up some new areas to visit, as you can't go anywhere until you have learned about it while playing the game.

For a game of this nature, with its multiple lines and dynamic aspects (those characters really do move around!), it's impossible to give any specific hints without giving a lot of the mystery away. So instead, I'll run down a list of tips and caveats to help you keep moving along (read the manual, too . . . it also has some handy hints).

It is good to save the game after the inquest. You are pretty much on your own, then, with many options as to where to go next. Some avenues of investigation are worthwhile, others aren't. Since you could easily miss something interesting or important, it's better to have a save position to return to, rather than having to replay the game.

In fact, you should try to make saves at various strategic points in the game, just so you aren't forced to replay from a much earlier position. Of course, the trick

(Continued on page 37)

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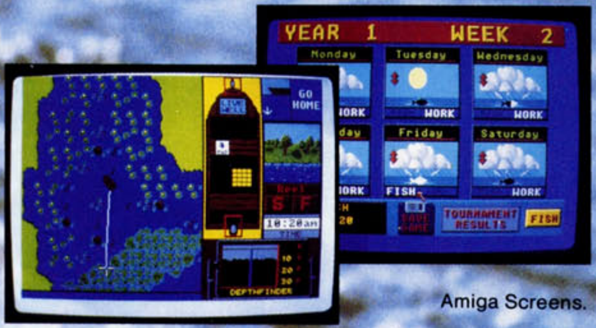
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Is VGA Worth It?

Some gamers want to have state of the art systems and other gamers want to play on the least common denominator system. Most IBM software publishers are still supporting the CGA (Color Graphics Adapter) card as the bottom end of the spectrum, but the top end continues to expand. EGA (Enhanced Graphics Adapter) cards and monitors are relatively standard in the entertainment software market, but VGA (Video Graphics Array) and MCGA (Multi-Color Graphic Array) offer more colors (256 in the palette) and higher resolution than its predecessors (usually a minimum of 640 pixels x 480 pixels, but VGA only provides 320 x 200 resolution when more than 16 colors are used).

The question most gamers are asking is, "Will it really enhance my enjoyment of computer games that much to purchase a VGA board and analog monitor?" The answers are somewhat more complex. The larger color palette certainly enriches the artwork utilized in the game and the higher resolution makes IBM compatible games look comparable to the Amiga or Atari ST for the first time, but the price tag is relatively hefty. *CGW* looked at two multiscanning monitors, both priced near $700 retail (the **Compaq Video-Graphics Color Monitor** and the **Mitsubishi XC1429C**). By the time a gamer adds a VGA card to take advantage of that monitor (we looked at the **Willow Peripherals** *VGA-TV* card, priced at $699, and **Video Seven** *Vega VGA*, priced at $499), that can cost upwards of $1400 to enhance an IBM compatible.

Further, until recently, many games which advertised their VGA compatibility actually ran in EGA mode. Now, **Electronic Arts** is supporting MCGA, a subset of VGA, which allows for a 256 color palette, with approximately six products by the end of 1989; **Activision** has approximately seven to eight VGA products under development for release in 1989 (not all will make *full* use of the available palette, but most will); **Microprose** is experimenting with VGA graphics on *F-15 Strike Eagle II* and *Sword of the Samurai*, **Microillusions** will offer *Questmaster I* with VGA graphics by mid-summer, and **Spinnaker** has already released *Quadralien* and *Stargoose* in VGA format (they look great!).

Monitors:

The **Compaq** *Video Graphics Color Monitor* has a lower dot pitch (.31 mm.) than the standard IBM PS/2 Color Display Model (.41). Since the lower pitch (which measures the space between pixels) provides for higher resolution, the **Compaq** is an excellent selection for gamers. The colors tend to be more pale than the **Mitsubishi** we compared it to, but this made for an advantage in viewing the sky in *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, as we were able to see more of the variation in the color palette used in the sky. On the other screens, however, the colors were not quite as rich as those on the **Mitsubishi** monitor. There was no problem with ghost images due to persistence of screen phosphors and the inclusion of a tilt and swivel stand as standard equipment was a welcome bonus. (Circle Reader Service Card #16)

The **Mitsubishi** *XC1429C* is a sturdy monitor which displays very rich colors. The .28 mm. dot pitch makes for particularly precise on-screen resolution and there is no trace of ghost images when the screen refreshes. This monitor particularly shines on darker palettes like the screen from *Budokan*, an **Electronic Arts** release currently under development. The tilt and swivel stand is optional. (Circle Reader Service Card #17)

VGA Boards:

The **Video Seven** *Vega VGA* board offers excellent value at a suggested retail price of $499. Gamers who use their machines for Windows/386 applications, as well as entertainment, will find that the *Vega VGA* not only supports those applications, but is also fully compatible with CGA, EGA, MDA, and Hercules programs. Under some circumstances, the board supports 720 x 540 or 800 x 600 resolution with a 16 color palette intact. We observed no visible flicker or persistent eyestrain when using this card. (Circle Reader Service Card #18)

Willow Peripherals *VGA-TV* is unique in that it not only supports VGA monitors, but offers an NTSC output that enables players to run VGA color on a standard television monitor. This feature explains the higher price tag. To use *VGA-TV* with a television requires some pin movement on the board itself, but once the adjustments are made, it works like a "real" monitor. The highest resolution is the standard 640 x 480 screen. Our only reservation revolves around a slight flicker due to the way the board handles interlacing. Some of us at *CGW* quickly became used to the flicker so that we didn't notice it, but others were continually bothered by it. (Circle Reader Service Card #19)

De gustibus non est disputandum. (Translation: You have to decide for yourself or more literally, "With regard to taste, there is no argument.") **CGW**



EA's *Budokan* on the **Mitsubishi** *XC1429C* and **Video Seven** *Vega VGA* Board



Activision's *Tongue of the Fatman* on the **Compaq** *Video Graphics Color Monitor* and the **Willow** *VGA-TV* card



Microprose's *F-15 Strike Eagle II* on the **Compaq** *Video Graphics Color Monitor* and the **Willow** *VGA-TV* card

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Marbles From Hell

by Douglas Seacat

B*allistix* is a sport played in a tiled arena, surrounded by a wall of skulls. The audience is a raucous band of demons, skeletons, and undead. All are seeking their brand of excitement. It is the player's job to provide the action, maneuvering a lightning-fast mirrored marble about the arena, blasting it with silver balls, and avoiding obstacles until the perfect shot can knock the marble (termed a "puck") into the goal.

While the basic idea is an old one, **Psygnosis** has done an excellent job of providing a fast-paced, pure action game. The concept is simple, but the game and its execution are not. As usual for this company, the graphics are extremely well-rendered, fast, and engaging. The colorful and humorously macabre arena background scrolls quickly and smoothly, although it can only be spared a few glances in the heat of the action.

The feel of the game is a mix of billiards, marbles, pinball, hockey, and similar sports. In the basic game, the player controls a small arrow, which can be moved about the game field. There are goals at either end of the arena, one to be defended and the other as a target. By pressing the button on the joystick, small balls are shot from the arrow in the general direction of the puck. Through careful maneuvering and aiming, it is possible to knock the puck into the opposing goal. Adding some spice, the floor tiles of the arena are sometimes transformed into targets, providing bonus points, goal shields, or other surprises. To further add to the challenge, there are 130 levels of game play (50 for the one-player game, 80 for the two-player version), each representing a different arena, complete with its custom obstacles. There are rubber bumpers, explosive mines, pools of acid, tunnels, and other hindrances to the player's progress.

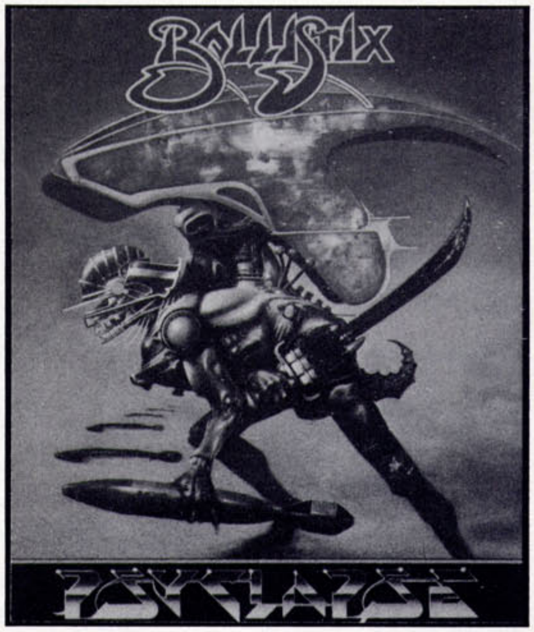
Doubles, Anyone?

The one-player and two-player games offered in the program are markedly different, both in their rules and in the focus of the action. The one-player game most resembles pinball. There is no computer opponent and the player is forced to work against gravity and the arena itself. If left alone, the puck will gradually pull itself directly into the player's own goal. While the lack of a computer opponent may be initially disquieting, the realistic movement of the puck and the difficulty of victory over gravity soon make up for this. Such a manner of handling play removes any need for chancy artificial intelligence and allows the player to play directly against the arena.

In the two-player version, there is no gravity. If the puck isn't fired upon, it will eventually slow and stop. Instead, the opponent is another human player. While there are obstacles in the two-player levels, they are usually evenly distributed in the arena so that neither player gains an immediate advantage. In addition, the balls must be shared between the two players. If one player shoots too rapidly, the balls he has fired will wind up in his opponent's possession. Further, if a player does not fire after several seconds, *all* his balls are given to his opponent. This is a good device to insure that game play keeps a rapid pace and, at the same time, rewards a player to fire carefully and not waste all his balls.

In addition to choosing between the one and two player games, the player may change how the balls are fired at the puck. For those who find the "fire from arrow" play too easy, the balls can be shot machine-gun style from the goal itself, with the arrow becoming a target sight. This option requires excellent timing and more strategy. It is not quite as fast-paced as the "fire from arrow" game, however.

Goal Shots (Good Points)

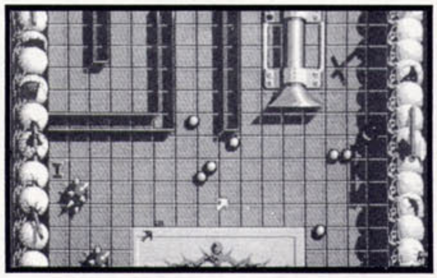


The game is extremely well programmed, not only in its look and sound, but in the way it feels. The action is fast and engaging, yet can be mastered quickly and enjoyed almost immediately. The different types of games offered, as well as the attention to detail give the game tremendous replay value. *Ballistix* is most addictive; playing just one game is virtually impossible. This product offers more nail-biting excitement and a stronger sporting atmosphere than most *real* sports simulations now found on the market.

TITLE:	Ballistix
SYSTEMS:	Amiga, Atari ST
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$29.95
DESIGNERS:	Reflections
PUBLISHER:	Psygnosis, Ltd. P.O. Box 483 Addison, IL 60101

Another point in the game's favor is the number of options it allows the player to work with. The player can quite easily change the number of balls available, the speed of the game, the "lifespan" of the balls, the goals needed to win, and what level the play is started on. This allows the player to handicap himself and make the game more difficult as he learns and masters it.

Ricochet (Bad Points)



While game play is virtually flawless, one cannot say the same for the way the game handles levels. A higher number of levels should have gone to the one-player game. After all, in the two-player games, the fun and challenge comes from the opponent, not the arena. Conversely, in the one-player game, the arena *is* the opponent. Therefore, a larger variety should have been more important. On the same note, there

(Continued on page 47)

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(Continued from page 30)

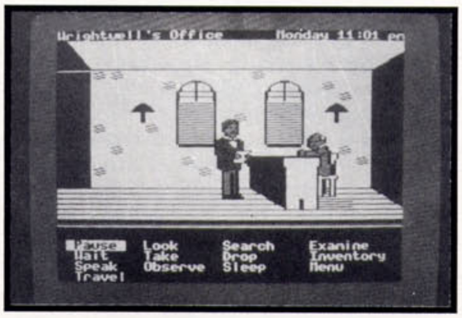
The Scoop

is to decide where those strategic points are, which isn't always easy.

One place in the game where it is usually good to save is when you're trying to decide between two destinations. For example, if you're wondering whether to go to Southampton or Brighton. Just save and go to one or the other. If nothing interesting comes of it, restore and try the other.

This trick is also handy when you want to follow people around and see where they are going (and if they're meeting someone, so you can listen in on their conversations . . . hehe!). Speaking of conversations, these generally begin about one minute after the participants arrive.

It is inevitable that you will be doing a lot of saving and restoring, since the first time you play, you can't really be sure what's important to follow up on (or



when). Therefore, you really need to take good notes and keep track of where you actually are in the game. Otherwise, you can easily become confused and not realize, until too late, that you don't have all the evidence you thought you had.

One thing you should always do when entering a new location is "Search." You may find something important. Even if you don't, come back another day and try again. Sometimes, an item that wasn't there before will be there now. Likewise, some items that were there before may not be available later on.

Always save the game *before* you show an object to someone. There are a few people who will grab important items from you if you give them the chance, and rarely, if ever, will you get these things back.

Another reason to have multiple saves is that your time to solve the murder is limited. If you don't manage it by Saturday afternoon, you lose. Thus, you have only about four and a half days to get everything done. When you add in the travel time, you soon discover that the four and one-half days go by very quickly.

As the game progresses, you will find it actually splits out so that you are actually investigating three crimes at once: the murders of Johnson and Tracey, a jewelry theft, and a drug-smuggling ring. All of them are interconnected in one way or another, so you can't afford to neglect any of them.

The theft is quite important, as eventually you will discover within its clues the one person who can identify the mysterious Mr. Tracey. Of course, whether or not he actually had anything to do with the murders is another matter (it should become obvious early on who Tracey is, but you have to *prove* it).

(Continued on page 38)

(Continued from page 37)

The Scoop

No one in the game locks their doors, which is very convenient for you. This allows you to walk into anyone's home (best when they aren't there) and snoop to your heart's content. It's a good way to find all sorts of interesting and, possibly incriminating, objects. Once in awhile, you can even search when another character is present. Don't be afraid to try. The game will tell you if it's possible or not, at no penalty to you.

The major characters always have something on their minds, and it's not always the same thing (major characters are those whose names show up when you ask the "tell me about someone" question). Whenever you talk to one of them, make sure to ask what they're thinking about. You can pick up all sorts of valuable information this way.

However, once you've asked someone to tell you about other people or where they were on a particular night, it's a waste to ever ask them again, since they are always consistent. Thus, once you've made the round of all the suspects, your future options are generally limited to finding out what's on their minds or getting their reactions to the various objects you show them.

Another reason to avoid repeated chats is that they eat up precious time on the clock. The minutes pass with each conversation, so asking people about the same things only hurts your chances (not to mention the additional time spent in tracking them down again). Take good notes the first time you talk with anyone.

Whenever you're in a particular area, be sure to take a moment and pop into any stores, hotels, or taverns that may be there. Someone *could* be inside. Remember, this is a dynamic game and the characters move around just as real people do. On the other hand, in some locations, characters may not be willing to talk to you. If that's the case, you'll just have to catch up with them somewhere else for a conversation.

The game does tend, after awhile, to become rather automatic. You search each location as you visit it, run through the gamut of conversational possibilities with any characters present, and exhibit your collection of items, etc. The main trick in the game is knowing when to be where for what, and this is learned over time (and many restores) through trial and error. Eventually, you put together enough threads so that you can then play the game along the true path that leads to successful completion in the time allowed.

Well, that seems to be it for now. Remember if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways (please folks, be specific with your requests; just saying "I'm having trouble finishing game X" isn't enough to allow me to help you):

On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On GEnie: Stop by the Games Roundtable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). On The Source: Send SMail to ST1030. By US Mail (enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

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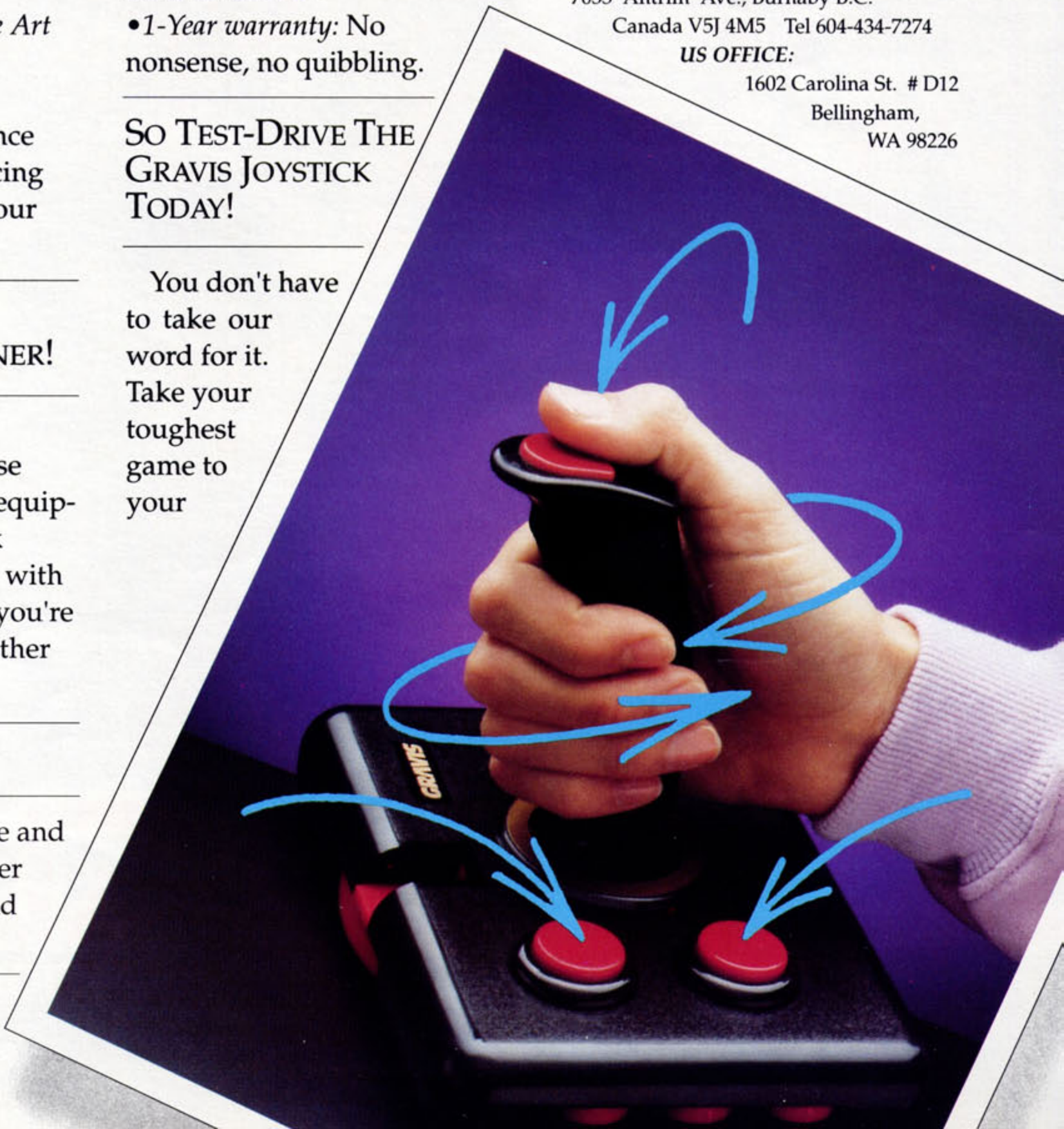
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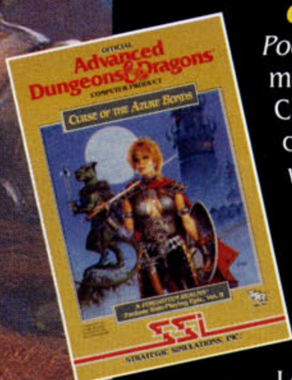
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Sunrise, Sunset

Japanese History in Cinemaware's "Lords of the Rising Sun"

By Michael Chaut



TITLE:	LORDS OF THE RISING SUN
SYSTEMS:	Amiga; Soon: IBM, Atari ST
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Doug Barnett
PROGRAMMER:	David Todd
PUBLISHER:	Cinemaware Westlake Village, CA

Upon a hilltop, not far from the castle, you halt the march and consider your strategic options. Your scouts report back, the Princess is here!

You send your second with a note demanding surrender. The Taira Clan refuse. With a sharp wave of your war fan, you signal your army of soldiers to form into a long column. Taking your Sacred Sword from its sheath you gallop to the front of the line and personally lead your troops in the Siege. "TAKE THE CASTLE!! FIND THE PRINCESS!!" The men surge towards the defiant gates with you leading the assault.

As one begins to play *Lords of the Rising Sun*, **Cinemaware**'s latest release, he/she is thrust into war-torn 12th century Japan as a member of the Minamoto Clan. The game presents the player with a unique blend of arcade action and strategic possibilities. As the game opens, the player is asked to choose between an interactive arcade version of the game or a strategic version.

As the player moves the cursor over his battlefield banner, the options change in the message window so that the banner functions as a menu. Once the Home Castle is entered, the player will be in the Council Room. Moving the cursor over the Seppuku (hara-kiri) Sword and the banners hanging on the wall will reveal the choices that are available at this juncture of the game. The five banners on the center wall are replicas of the banners of the other generals in the war: the remaining brother's banner, the Taira banner, the ensigns of the three independent generals, the Ronin (Note: The Ronin generals have armies that may or may not join up with you during your campaigns. The equation is dependent upon your size, strength and overall power rating at the particular time of contact and can only be learned through trial and error.).

When the player exits his Home Castle and selects "Prepare to March," he is presented with a vast map of feudal Japan in all its splendor. The game interface allows the player to use the map to move generals from one location to another, gather information about a specific location or general, and determine the outcome of encounters between opposing forces (i.e. form an alliance, demand a surrender, engage an enemy in battle, take or attack a city, and siege a castle).

The game ends when the player either dies or captures all 19 Castles. Either way, at the conclusion of the game, players will see a montage showing their ratings (25 possible) and depicting the battles that they fought. The character's life literally flashes before their eyes. The ratings depend on the levels of battle skills earned, the number of generals commanded, the number of territories owned, and the leadership abilities built up during the game, as well as how many pieces of the Imperial Regalia have been collected.

WARNING: This section of the review contains specific hints on game play. Readers who prefer a more general briefing should avoid this section.

The Player should save the game regularly. One never knows when a error in judgement will cause the loss of an entire army. Due to the fact that the programers neglected to provide for a 'permanent' save game feature, if a player utilizes the Preserve History (save game) Option from within a previously saved game, their original game will be replaced, furthermore, if a player is killed or starts a new rebellion from within a saved game, their saved game will erased from the disk. In order to insure permanent storage within the Preserve History Option, it is necessary to completely exit the game and to copy the 'Savedgame' file from the Lords directory (for hard drive players) or Reel 2 (for floppy disk players) to an additional floppy. Then and only then can the Player be sure to have a 'permanent' copy of their saved game. This gives the Player an easy method to backtrack. It may be very time consuming to exit out to the 'Cli' and to copy the 'savedgame' file, however, it is better than starting the game over from the beginning.

When sieging a castle, if you hack at a door three times (using the left mouse button) you can shoot arrows through the door (using the right mouse button) inflicting damage and be protected from the onslaught of enemy soldiers from the other side.

If you siege castles in the interactive mode, castle difficulty levels and floorplans are determined by the skill levels of the besieger. Therefore, sieging a castle with a low skilled general will reduce

(Continued on page 45)

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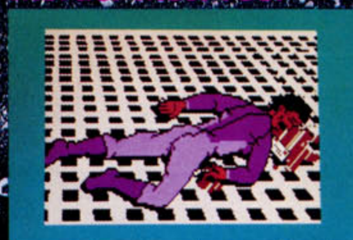
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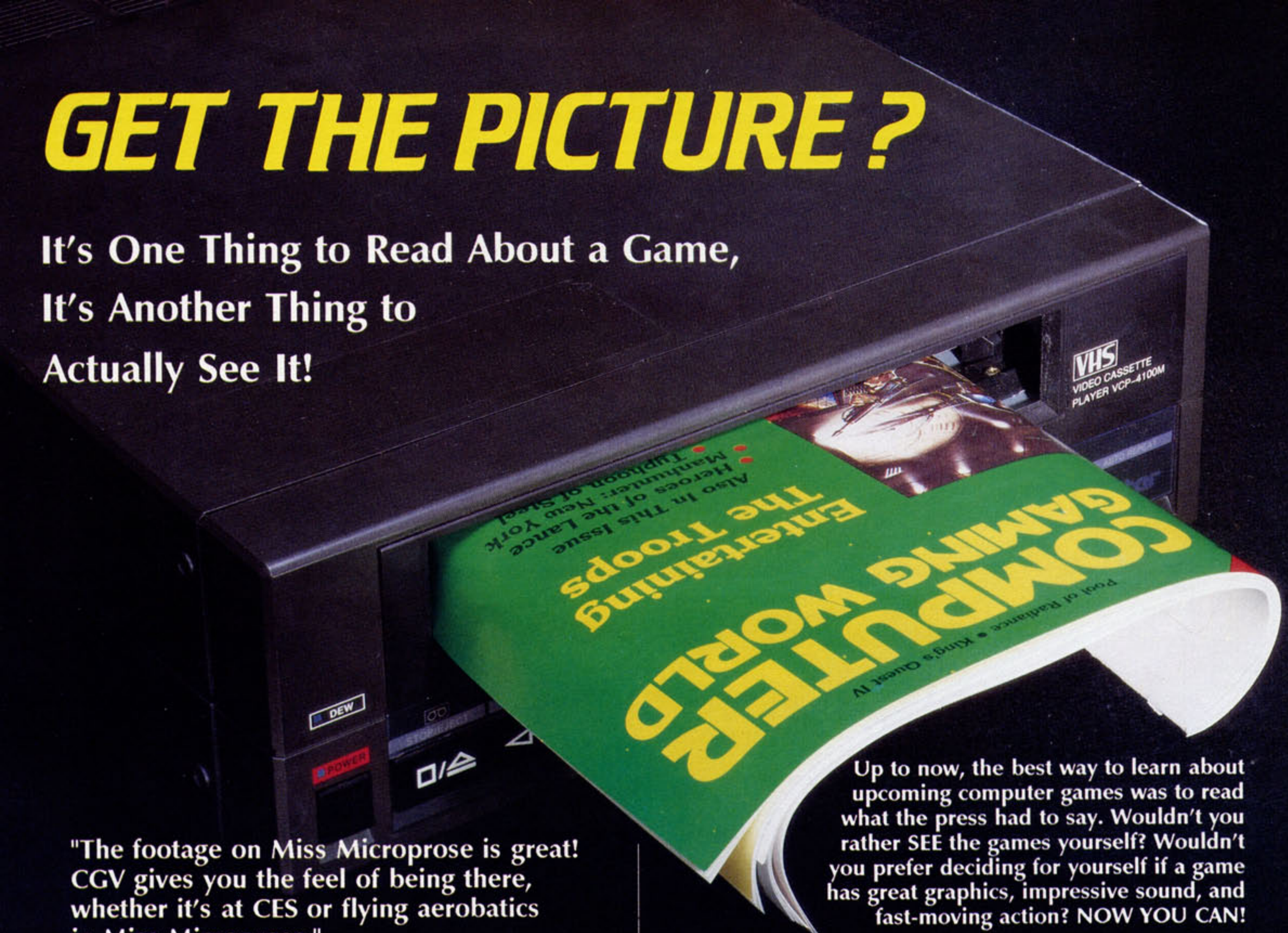
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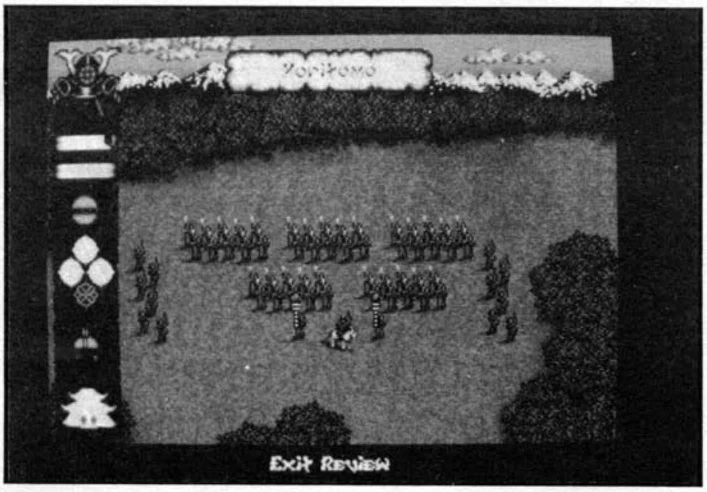
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LORDS OF THE Rising Sun™

(Continued from page 42)



the difficulty of the castle being taken. Once a floorplan is set, it remains set for that particular castle for the entire game. One particular tactic would be to use a low skilled general to enter the castle in a siege attempt. After an unsuccessful siege or quick retreat, a high skilled general could be used to go in and take the castle with little or no trouble.

It can greatly enhance a Player's 'power status' to retrieve all four of the Imperial Regalia. The Emperor at the Palace in Kyoto holds the Sacred Scroll and the Sacred Sword. In order to convince the Emperor to bestow these honors upon you, Players should try space their visits to the Palace at least one year apart. The Shrine of Hachiman is located within the Castle at Kamakura (Yoritomo starts out with this object) and initially the Princess is being held within one of the seven Taira Castles, although she can be moved as gameplay advances.

New generals are extremely dangerous, so always make note of the messages that appear in the message windows. Specifically, as new armies are formed. Although your own generals start out with a 100% loyalty to you, those not kept well supplied and "happy" they may be influenced away. If a general leaves you, they will take with them all of the property that they have acquired and own. Therefore, treat your generals well. Let them resupply and get more men regularly. Also, try not to let them get much more powerful than you, they may then try to overthrow you.

The best place to resupply your armies are at castles although cities and monasteries can also be helpful. Since in real life, ports have a higher influx of men and supplies, so do those of the game. Therefore, port castles are the absolute best source for resupplying your armies. The number of troops at a single location will determine the time it takes to resupply. The season of the year will also have its effect on the resupply speed as well as travelling costs (i.e. during the winter months, supplies will replenish more slowly and travelling great distances will be more costly in men and strength.)

(Continued on page 46)

CONCLUSIONS

As this reviewer watched the opening procession of graphics the only thing that came to mind is "It's really like a movie!" Throughout the game the designer has obviously taken measures to insure this 'movie like' arena. In most cases, this is beneficial to the gamer, however, the inability to govern the transfer troops was definitely noticed. The arcade sequences are some of the most realistic this reviewer has encountered. David Todd, the wizard programmer of the game, gives the player the ability to take part in sieging or attacking castles, fighting enemy armies, horseback pursuits, fending off would-be castle take-overs and ninja attacks. All of the arcade sequences are presently operated through the mouse with no joystick support. Although mouse control is accurate, joystick support was sorely missed; at least in the arcade sequences. If you are one who has not had a lot of dealings with the mouse, it will take some getting used to.

An accelerated time mode is provided for, although this reviewer felt that maybe an additional level would have been preferable, as well as an on-screen notification that the accelerated mode was activated.

From whispering winds to screaming samurai, the original music and sound effects for the game are "outrageous!" The scrolling 3-D graphics are outstanding. This reviewer felt as though he was playing an animated *Risk* game. This program's unique approach provides a different fulfillment to each kind of player (i.e. strategists get strategy, arcade masters are put to the test, and the people that fall in between get a little from both worlds).

This reviewer particularly enjoyed the mixture of arcade and strategy elements. This mixture not only allows the player to become part of the movie as it unfolds but really lets one feel like he or she is participating in the story. *Lords of the Rising Sun* is highly recommended.

CGW

(Continued from page 11)

Tracon

back to DOS. While this may appear a grievous penalty, given the situation, it is justified.

The mouse allows quick access to the planes. However, one will discover that adjusting their heading and altitude is more accurately done by keystroke. Combining both mouse and keyboard entry minizes player error.

In Version 1.0, vectoring of aircraft was complicated by a distinction between true and magnetic north. Vectoring required a 15-degree correction either left or right (depending on whether the scenario was western or eastern). However, Version 1.5 has corrected the radar screens to a magnetic-alignment, wherein 0x is now vertical (a much-appreciated refinement).

This reviewer spent much time on the DCA scenario. The radar screen appeared very accurate; the Montgomery airport (GAI) is actually the Gaithersburg Airport, which is currently under pressure to close because of the housing developments built in the vicinity. Be that as it may, it yielded an additional sense of reality to vector in numerous aircraft in own's own "backyard", so to speak.

While the game has a "pause" key, utilization of such yields an immediate 10,000 point penalty (the documentation refers to this as "cheating." This may be true, but when the phone rings, one answers it or pays the consequences in the "real" world.

Final Approach

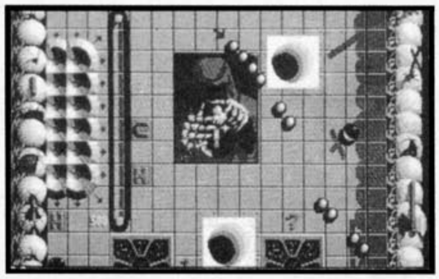
This reviewer's initial impression was muted, in that the simulation appeared to be too much simulation and not enough game. However, repeated play has shown that *Tracon* can be a very enjoyable pastime. It is definitely not for the arcade set. If one finds intellectual challenge appealing, *Tracon* is heartily recommended.

CGW

(Continued from page 37)

Marbles From Hell

should have been a different set of levels for the "fire from goal" method of play, since it is so different from the normal mode. Finally, many of the levels did not seem particularly creative. A construction set could also have been included with the game in order to allow the player to make his own arenas.



Final Score (Conclusion)

Despite the lack of entirely adequate levels, this writer thoroughly enjoyed *Ballistix* and it is to be strongly recommended. The graphics and sound are great and the ability to freely alter the game options make it a game that can be played many times without loss of enjoyment. The game provides fast, primal, addictive action, well worth traveling to "Hell" to enjoy.

CGW

On the R.I.D. card provided opposite page 4, please rate the following games (if you have played them) and articles (if you have read them) by using a letter grade scale (I.e. A to F). Just rate the games as if you were an educator. As with the world of education, the scale will translate to:

A= Excellent

B= Above Average

C= Average

D= Below Average

F= Failure

If you wish, you may assign pluses (+) or minuses (-) to your letter grade (i.e. B+, B-, C+, C-, etc.). As always, rate only those games that you have played.

Over the next three issues we will rerate all of the games on our current R.I.D. list and a number of other titles as well. Remember that thousands of gamers will be making buying decisions based on the results of these ratings, so help your fellow gamer out and let him know what is a worthy purchase and what is not.

Demographics

(List the appropriate number)

1. What is your age ?

1 = Under 14 years old
2 = 14-17 years old
3 = 18-20 years old
4 = 21-30 years old
5 = 31-35 years old
6 = 36-40 years old
7 = 41-50 years old
8 = 51+ years old

2. What machine(s) do you play games on?

(List all numbers that apply. List the machine you use most often first, the others in decending order of use).

1 = IBM, clones, Tandy
2 = Amiga
3 = Apple 8 bit
4 = Apple IIgs
5 = Atari ST
6 = Atari 8 bit
7 = C-64/128
8 = Macintosh
9 = Other (specify)

3. How much time do you typically spend playing computer games each week?

1 = Less than 2 hours
2 = 2-5 hours
3 = 6-10 hours
4 = 11-20 hours
5 = 21-30 hours
6 = 31+ hours

Games

RID #61 Questions

4. Dungeon Master (FTL)
5. F-19 Stealth Fighter (Microprose)
6. Wasteland (EA)
7. Red Storm Rising (Microprose)
8. The Magic Candle (Mindcraft)
9. Ultima V (Origin)
10. Battlehawks 1942 (Lucasfilm)
11. Project: Stealth Fighter (Microprose)
12. Might & Magic II (New World)
13. Romance of the Three Kingdoms (Koei)
14. Journey (Infocom)
15. Hidden Agenda (Springboard)
16. Batman (Data East)
17. Balance of Power: 1990 (Mindscape)
18. Doctor Doom's Revenge (Paragon)
19. Hillsfar (SSI)
20. Devon Aire (Epyx)
21. Space Quest III (Sierra)
22. Neuromancer (Interplay)
23. Overrun! (SSI)
24. Typhoon of Steel (SSI)
25. Gold Rush (Sierra)
26. Lords of Rising Sun (Cinemaware)
27. Magic Johnson's Basketball (Melbourne House)
28. Thunder Blade (Mindscape)
29. The Scoop (Spinnaker)
30. MacArthur's War (SSG)
31. Tangled Tales (Origin)
32. John Madden Football (EA)
33. Chuck Yeager's AFT 2.0 (EA)
34. Test Drive II (Accolade)
35. Sim City (Maxis)
36. Curse of the Azure Bonds (SSI)
37. Puzzle Gallery (Miles)
38. Fire King (SSG)
39. Scavengers (Interstel)
40. Ballistix (Psygnosis)

Articles

41. Tracon Review
42. CES Report
43. MacArthur's War Review
44. Sniper! Review
45. Indiana Jones Sneak
46. The Scoop Review
47. Is VGA Worth It?
48. Lords of the Rising Sun Review
49. CGW Test Lab on Joysticks
50. Ballistix Review

Questions

51. Would you like to know more about VGA cards and monitors?
A. Yes, but only in chart form.
B. No, a thousand times no!
C. Not until it is the predominant standard.
D. Yes, if it isn't every issue.
E. Probably not.

52. Would you like more comparisons of joysticks and other controllers as they work in games?

A. Probably not.
B. Yes, if it isn't every issue.
C. No, it's a silly idea.
D. No, once is enough.
E. Yes, it helped me.

53. CGW is now working on issue #1 of Computer Gaming Videomagazine (see ad on pg. 44). Please tell us what you think about CGV. Enter all letters that are applicable.

A. I have already ordered it.
B. I plan to order CGV.
C. I'm thinking about ordering CGV.
D. I'm not interested in CGV.
E. I would buy CGV if it were priced at the dollar amount that I have entered in space 54 on this RID card.

54. If you entered the letter E as a response to question 53, please enter the appropriate dollar figure here.

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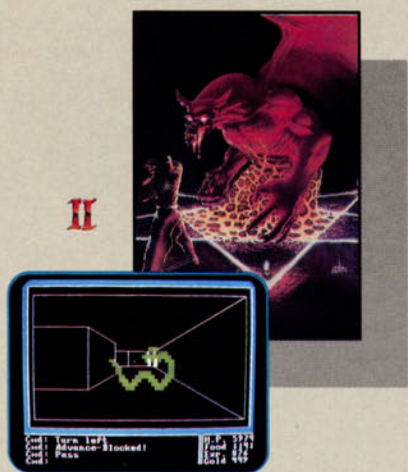
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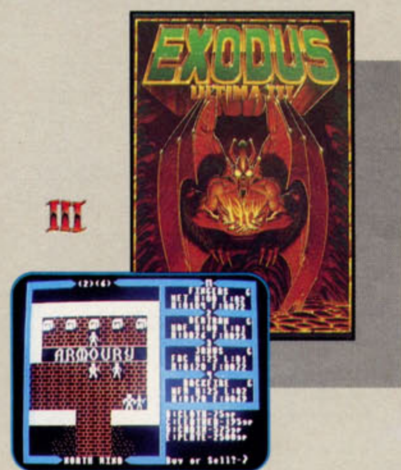
I



II



III



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